

main

way during the liquidation of the "cauldron" in the Shakhovo region. And according to the headquarters of the Voronezh Front, by July 16, there were 24,880

missing in the troops of the front. Soviet tanks, according to Manstein, the Germans destroyed 1800 units by July 13, and according to the headquarters of the Voronezh Front, by July 16, 1888 tanks and self-propelled guns were irretrievably lost or knocked out. Soviet guns,

How

Manstein believed that his troops destroyed and captured 1347, and according to Vatutin's headquarters, by July 16, 1605 guns were irretrievably lost.

It should be noted here that a comparison of Manstein's data with the data of the final report of the headquarters of the Voronezh Front proves that the latter significantly underestimate Soviet irretrievable losses. After all, the side that takes them usually knows more or less exactly the number of prisoners. And in

The Red Army among the missing often turned out to be not only prisoners, but also those killed, about whose death there was no reliable information. And in any case, the presence by July 16 of 34 thousand

of Soviet prisoners says that the number of missing persons is underestimated by more than 9 thousand

Human. But, as L. N. Lopukhovsky proved, the report of the headquarters of the Voronezh Front did not take into account the losses of the 7th Guards and

69th armies in the period from July 5 to 19, since these armies were transferred to the Steppe Front on July 20. The historian drew attention to the fact that,

according to the monthly summary of losses for July, this month the front lost 99,596 people, including 19,658 killed, 16,704 missing and captured, 62,478

wounded and sick, and 756 out of action for other reasons. (accidents, suicides, etc.). The fact that these losses turned out to be 1336 people less than the losses for

19 days of the defensive operation, Lopukhovsky explains by the fact that, perhaps, in the final report, at least some of those 6.4 thousand missing were

excluded from the missing, who by August 1, they were able to return to their units. But in the total losses of the Voronezh Front for July, the losses of the 7th Guards and

69th armies are taken into account. According to this document, the losses of the Voronezh Front amounted to 148,349

Human.

The difference between these figures (99,596 people) will give us the approximate losses of these two armies - 48,753 killed, wounded and missing. According

to the data cited by L. N. Lopukhovsky, the 69th Army lost 26,415 people in the period from July 1 to July 19, including 4,351 killed, 10,614 missing and captured,

11,411 wounded and sick (there were only 387 sick), and another 39 people were out of action for other reasons.

The 7th Guards Army during the same period lost 28,578 people, including 6,086 killed, 3,975 missing and captured, 18,458 wounded and sick (the latter were only 591),
and

also 59 people who were out of action for other reasons. If we add these losses to those listed in the report of the headquarters of the Voronezh Front for the period from 4
to 16 February, then the latter will increase to 28,534 killed, 33,469 captured and missing, and 77,239 wounded and sick.

Now the number of missing people is almost equal to the number
Soviet

prisoners captured by Manstein's troops during the implementation of the operation "Citadel" from 4 to 16 July. However, according to L. N. Lopukhovskiy, by the end of

July, 6.4 thousand people, previously considered missing, returned to the Voronezh Front. It can be assumed that at least 6,000 of the returnees went

missing before 16 July. Then the number of those missing, who were captured or killed, will be reduced to 27.5 thousand. At least 7,500 prisoners were not taken into account in the official irretrievable losses by the headquarters of the Voronezh Front. But at the same time, it seems completely unbelievable that

number

missing persons included only those who were captured. Accounting for irretrievable losses in the Red Army was very poor. The dead Red Army soldiers, about whose
death there was no reliable data, were listed as missing.

The scale of the underestimation of Soviet losses is well illustrated by the following example. On July 5, 1943, by the beginning of the Battle of Kursk, the troops of
the Central Front, commanded by Rokossovskiy, numbered 738 thousand people, and during the defensive battle until July 11

inclusive

lost 15,336 people killed and missing, according to the data of the collection "Secrecy Removed", and 18,561 people wounded and sick. By the time the Red Army

went on the offensive on Orel, on July 12, the composition of the troops of the Central Front had not changed much: one tank brigades arrived and two rifle

brigades left. The tank brigade then in the state consisted of 1300 people, and in one rifle brigade there were 4.2 thousand people. With this in mind, by the beginning

of the Oryol operation, the Central Front was supposed to have 697 thousand people of personal

composition.

However, according to the authors of the book "Secrecy Removed", at that moment there were only 645,300 people in Rokossovskiy's troops. This means that the true losses of the Central Front in the defensive battle near Kursk were at least 51.7 thousand more than official statistics claim. And this is only on condition
that the troops of the Central Front in

during the defensive operation, no marching reinforcements were received. If such

replenishment

reported, the real losses should have been even higher. Could not immediately such a number

people to desert or simply disappear who knows where, and even in the conditions of fierce battles and in the treeless Kursk steppes!

It should be emphasized that the main part of the underestimated Soviet losses should have been irretrievable losses, primarily the missing, since the wounded admitted to hospitals were counted much more accurately than the dead.

While still the chief of staff of the Don Front, General Malinin wrote to lower headquarters during the completion of the Battle of

Stalingrad: "Looking through the daily results of the day on

quantity

destroyed manpower and equipment and captured trophies, I came to the conclusion that these data are significantly

overestimated and, therefore, do not correspond to reality. But just the same

the losses of their own troops were also underestimated, especially irretrievable ones, including in the reports of the troops of the Central Front.

In view of the foregoing, the data on the losses of the Voronezh Front, contained in the report of its headquarters, also turn out to

be underestimated, especially in terms of irretrievable losses. It can be assumed that among the missing dead there

should have been at least as many

same as the number of prisoners. Then the true number of missing in the Voronezh Front in the period from 4 to 16 July can be

estimated at 68 thousand people. In this case, the total losses of the front in the specified period can be estimated at 133.4

thousand people, irretrievable - at 86.1 thousand.

Manstein estimated the number of Soviet soldiers killed between July 4 and 16 at 17,000, and the number of wounded at least

34,000. It turns out that he underestimated Soviet sanitary losses by 1.4 times, and irretrievable losses by 1.7 times. As

Manstein notes, during the Citadel, the troops of his army group lost 20,720 people, including 3,330 killed and missing. Manstein's

data may also underestimate German casualties, but the grand total remains

unchanged: during the Battle of Kursk, the Germans lost at least five times fewer soldiers and officers than the Soviet troops.

The ratio of military equipment losses was also extremely unfavorable for the Red Army. Total

on the northern face of the Kursk Bulge, from July 5 to 14, the German 9th Army irretrievably lost 88 tanks and assault guns

(including 4 "Tigers" and 19

"Ferdinands"), and on the southern face of the arc, from 5 to 17 July troops of Army Group "South" irretrievably lost 190 tanks, assault guns and self-propelled guns

(including 6 "tigers" and 44 "panthers"). The troops of the Voronezh Front during the defensive battle near Kursk from July 5 to July 17

irretrievably lost

1886 tanks and self-propelled guns. This gives a ratio of irretrievable losses in armored vehicles of 10:1 in favor of the Germans. The irretrievable losses

of the Central Front in tanks and self-propelled guns during the defensive battle near Kursk can be estimated at 410 tanks. Probably no less number of cars were

damaged. To this we must add another 28 irretrievably lost self-propelled guns. But this estimate of losses is given without taking into account the replenishment of

armored vehicles. Such a replenishment by the beginning of the offensive operation, if we assume that by this time about 800 tanks had failed, should have

been about 500 vehicles. If among these new tanks the share of irretrievable losses was approximately the same as among

tank

formations involved at the beginning of the operation, then about 120 more vehicles must be added to the 410 irretrievably lost tanks. Then the total irretrievable

losses of armored vehicles of the Central Front during the Kursk defensive operation can be estimated at 530 tanks and 28 self-propelled guns. The ratio with

the irretrievable losses of tanks and assault guns of the 9th German Army turns out to be 6.3:1 in favor of the Germans. Nevertheless, this is one and a half times better than the indicator achieved by the Voronezh Front.

Rokossovsky achieved better results than Vatutin, both thanks to his military leadership talent and due to some objective circumstances. As already

mentioned, the Central Front was supposed to go on the offensive earlier than the Voronezh Front, therefore, at the time of the start of the Citadel,

Rokossovsky had an artillery breakthrough corps at hand and much more ammunition than Vatutin had. In addition, the length of the tank-hazardous

directions on the Voronezh Front was twice as high as on the Central. Important

meaning

also had the fact that the German group advancing on the southern face of the Kursk Bulge had

about 300 tanks more than the group advancing against the Central Front, and also included three selected motorized (actually panzer) divisions of the

SS and the elite motorized division "Grossdeutschland", each of which significantly exceeded the combat capability of a conventional Wehrmacht panzer

division. But this does not detract from the merits of Rokossovsky. Here we must take into account at least the following fact. If in

early

tank battles on the Central and Voronezh fronts were almost equally divided, and during the defensive operation, the Central Front received only a few hundred tanks in

replenishment

losses, the Voronezh Front, only as part of the 5th Guards Tank and 5th Guards Armies, as well as individual tank corps, received an additional about a thousand tanks and self-propelled guns, not counting several hundred tanks received to make up for losses.

However, its

very

Vatutin was never able to realize a significant superiority in tanks, while Rokossovsky, having correctly distributed forces and means, managed to prevent a breakthrough in the defense of the Central

front.

During the Battle of Kursk, for the first time on the Eastern Front, the Germans massively used new types of weapons and military equipment: Tiger and Panther tanks, Ferdinand assault guns, and FV-190 and Xe-129 aircraft. And they seem to

have achieved good results in this and in subsequent battles. So, according to German statistics, all units equipped

with T-UGi T-UPV tanks ("Tiger" and "Royal Tiger") lost 1,715 vehicles irretrievably throughout the war and on all fronts, destroying

9,850 enemy tanks and self-propelled guns, that is, the ratio losses

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armored vehicles is close to 1:6. But, at least on the Eastern Front, the modernized T-GU with a long-barreled 75-mm cannon had no worse results. Meanwhile, T-U, even modernized, cost many times less than the same "typhus" or

"panther". Instead of one "typhoid" it was possible to produce a dozen T-[Us] and thereby achieve a more favorable quantitative

ratio in terms of armored vehicles with the Red Army and armies

Western allies. Moreover, in the West, tanks that would have surpassed the modernized T-TU did not appear until the end of the war.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Germans lost World War II in that

number and

because they had the most advanced scientific and technical thought. They were, perhaps, the only participants who, already during the war, were intensively introducing fundamentally new models of weapons and military equipment into mass

production, be it "tigers", "panthers", be it the latest Focke-Wulfs and Me-262 jet fighters. or V-rockets. All these new

were many times more expensive than their earlier counterparts (for V-missiles, such an analogue was heavy strategic bombers),

but by no means as many times more effective.

Instead of

in order to spend energy and money on the latest "toys", perhaps it was worth increasing

production of old samples, only modernizing them. Then maybe it would be possible if not

eliminate, then significantly reduce the numerical superiority of the allies in weapons and military equipment. But under the conditions of a totalitarian regime, the main task was to develop and produce the necessary weapons and military equipment, and the question of its price faded into the background.

The Germans, meanwhile, continued their systematic withdrawal from the Oryol salient. On the evening of August 16, the Headquarters directive came to develop the offensive in the Kiev direction:

"In connection with the advance of our troops in the Bryansk and Kharkov directions, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command orders:

The central front, advancing in the general direction of Sevs, hut. Mikhailovsky, no later than 1-3.9 enter the front of the river.

Desna south of Trubchevsk, Novgorod-Seversky, Shostka, Glukhov, Rylsk. In the future, develop the offensive in

the general direction of Konotop, Nizhyn, Kyiv and, under favorable conditions, force part of the forces on the river. Desna and advance along its right bank in the direction of Chernigov.

Rokossovsky recalled: "On August 26, the Central Front, after some regrouping, launched an offensive. The main blow was inflicted on the Sevs direction by the troops of the 65th and 2nd tank (heavily weakened) armies. Their advance was to be facilitated by the flank formations of the 48th and 60th armies, adjacent to the strike force.

By the end of August 27, the 65th and 2nd tank armies captured Sevs. Further advance was stopped by German reserves.

But success was indicated on the front of the 60th Army, adjacent to the cool flank of the 65th. Its commander, I. D.

Chernyakhovsky, took advantage of the fact that the enemy transferred part of his forces from the sector of the 60th

Army near Sevs. On August 29, units of the army captured Glukhov. Chernyakhovsky threw mobile groups into the gap using

army vehicles. Rokossovsky, in turn, transferred the 2nd tank and 13th armies, and then the 61st army of General P. A. Belov, to develop success.

These days Konstantin Konstantinovich saw his daughter. On August 30, 1943, Ariadna Konstantinovna

Rokossovskaya, who worked as a radio operator at the mobile radio center of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement, received permission to visit her father:

"Vacation ticket

Radio operator comrade Rokossovskaya A. K. was released on a short leave with the right to travel to the headquarters of the Central Front from September 31 to September 6, 1943.

Deadline for return to unit 6.9.43

Head of the radio center
Engineer-Captain Pokrovsky. Konstantin
Vilyevich Rokossovsky recalled:

"Mom told such a case: she was given a few days of rest, and she went to the headquarters of the front. Grandfather was just going to the front line, she persuaded her to take her with her. Suddenly, out of nowhere

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German planes appeared, someone shouted: "Air!" Bombs rained down. Everyone jumped out of their cars and lay down on the side of the road. Mom did not have time to hide and collapsed to the ground. Then the grandfather covered her with his body and did not allow her to get up until the planes flew home. When the smoke cleared, it turned out that there was nothing left of the car. But the worst thing was the way the officers looked at my mother. For them, the life of the radio operator Rokossovskaya was much less valuable than the life of the front commander, and because of her he could die. Until the end of her life, my mother recalled how ashamed she was.

On September 6, the troops of the 60th Army liberated Konotop, on September 9 - Bakhmach, and on the 15th - Nizhyn.

A tempting prospect opened up to capture Kiev, over which the troops of the Central Front hung from the north. The 13th Army of General P.N. Pukhov, which reached the Desna, received an order to force the Dnieper on the move and seize a bridgehead there in the Chernobyl-mouth of the Teterev River. P. I. Batov

but with the 65th army he was supposed to capture Novgorod-Seversky. Voronezh Front lagged behind
from

Central for 100-120 kilometers. Rokossovsky's armies had a real opportunity with

move to liberate the capital of Soviet Ukraine.

Konstantin Konstantinovich recalled:

"A huge gap has formed between the troops of the two fronts. Chernyakhovsky was forced
Part
allocate forces to ensure the stretched flank, thereby weakening their strike force.

It's an embarrassing thing, of course. But, on the other hand, such a deep advance of the 60th and 13th armies in the
Chernigov and
Kiev directions opened up attractive prospects for us: we could

to strike at the flank of the enemy grouping, which was fighting against the troops of the right wing of the Voronezh Front
and
holding back their advance. Thus, we would not allow the enemy to withdraw troops beyond the Dnieper, we would
contribute
to the advance of our neighbor, perhaps by joint efforts we would be able to capture Kiev. My proposal was
discussed but not
accepted. Moreover, they expressed dissatisfaction to me that Chernyakhovsky, with my permission, occupied Priluki,
which were
outside our boundary line.

Due to the fact that our left flank was increasingly stretched, at my request, the Stavka transferred to us from its reserve
the 61st Army of
General P. A. Belov, which we soon introduced between the 65th and 13th armies in the Chernigov direction. This made it
possible

to significantly narrow the offensive zone of the 60th Army, which accelerated its advance towards Kyiv. I visited
Chernyakhovsky after
his troops liberated Nizhyn. Soldiers and officers experienced an unprecedented upsurge. They forgot about fatigue
and rushed forward.

Everyone lived with one dream - to take part in the liberation of the capital of Ukraine. Chernyakhovsky, of course,
also had
such a mood. All his actions were permeated by the desire to quickly reach Kyiv. And he achieved a lot. Troops of the
60th Army,
sweeping away the remnants of

defeated enemy divisions, moved rapidly, they were already on the outskirts
To
Ukrainian capital.

What was our disappointment when, in the second half of September, on the orders of the Headquarters,
the dividing line between
the Central and Voronezh fronts was moved to the north and Kyiv retreated into the neighbor's zone! Chernigov became
our main
direction now.

I considered it my duty to call Stalin. Said I don't understand the reason for this change

dividing line. He answered briefly: this was done at the insistence of comrades Zhukov and Khrushchev, they are
there, they
know better. This answer provided no clarity. But there was neither time nor special need to clarify.

In fact, it is not strategy that rules the ball here, but pure politics. For the propaganda mythology that was born right on the battlefields, Stalin needed Ukrainians to command the troops sent to liberate the capital of Ukraine. Chernyakhovsky seemed to be suitable for this purpose - according to his passport, he was considered a Ukrainian, although

Ukrainian language and did not know. But here Rokossovsky did not pull on the Ukrainian in any way, being considered, depending on the situation, either a Russian, or a Pole, or even a Belarusian. But the Voronezh (later the 1st Ukrainian) Front was commanded by a purebred Ukrainian Nikolai Fedorovich

Vatutin, and the head of the Ukrainian communists N. S. Khrushchev was a member of the military council. The army was in trouble. The 38th Army, which in October-November 1943 was to take Kyiv directly, was commanded by General N. E. Chibisov, a purebred Russian, from the Don Cossacks. Before the start of the last decisive offensive, he was urgently replaced by the Ukrainian K.S. Moskalenko.

Chibisov, as a consolation, was promoted to colonel general, conferring on him the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Stalin, obviously, was not going to castling, transferring Rokossovsky to the Voronezh Front, and Vatutin and Khrushchev to the Central. Change commanders who knew well their troops, in the midst of the offensive was inappropriate. It was much easier to move the dividing lines between the fronts. And the decision on this, of course, was taken by Stalin himself, although Zhukov and Khrushchev, no doubt, warmly supported such a decision - they really wanted to free the "mother of Russian cities."

I think that Konstantin Konstantinovich guessed why the troops of his front were not allowed to take

Kyiv, and this knowledge did not please him at all. It was not the first and not the last time he suffered from his Polish nationality.

Rokossovsky was very offended that Kyiv sailed away from under his very nose. After all, by September 23, his 13th Army had captured a Stashev bridgehead 35 kilometers deep and 30-35 kilometers wide on the western bank of the Dnieper north of Kyiv in the Chernobyl region. And by the end of September, the 60th Army had captured a bridgehead 12-15 kilometers deep and 20 kilometers wide.

Konstantin Konstantinovich recalled: "Chernyakhovsky received instructions from me to deepen the captured area, advancing to the west and southwest, bypassing Kyiv. But the commander, like a magnet,

attracted Kyiv. And he sent the main blow to the south, along the Dnieper. Chernyakhovsky lost sight of the fact that it was easiest for the enemy to organize a rebuff just in this direction, which was facilitated by the features of the terrain and the proximity of the city, from where the enemy threw into battle all the forces that were there.

Chernyakhovsky's desire to move closer to Kyiv prevented the army from deepening the bridgehead. Several days were lost in fruitless attacks. The enemy took advantage of this delay, pulled up forces in the threatened direction and stopped the advance of our units. It was not possible to expand the bridgehead along the coast either.

It can be seen that Chernyakhovsky really wanted to take Kyiv. However, Ivan Danilovich overestimated their

strength, underestimated the enemy and was defeated. However, this particular failure did not affect

on the actions of other troops of the Central Front. 61st and 65th armies reached the Sozh river. In his memoirs, Rokossovsky believed that "the rapid advance of the troops of our left wing on Kiev

direction forced the enemy to hastily withdraw their divisions operating against the Voronezh Front. This, of course, greatly helped the neighbor. And yet it

is a pity that we were not allowed to strike at the flank and rear of the enemy troops, using the overhanging position of the units of the 60th Army. In this case, we could not only help our neighbor more effectively, but also prevent the enemy from withdrawing troops beyond the Dnieper."

On September 27, Rokossovsky was in the Kremlin at a reception with Stalin. Together with him, the meeting was attended by Deputy Chief of the General Staff A. I. Antonov and Commander of the Bryansk Front M. M. Popov. Perhaps at this meeting it was finally decided which front to take Kyiv, and also determined the procedure for interaction between the Central Front, renamed the Belorussian Front on October 20, and the Bryansk Front. At the same time, the 50th Army of General I.V. Boldin, the 3rd Army of General A.V. Gorbatov and the 63rd Army of General V.Ya. Kolpakchi were transferred from the Bryansk Front to the Belorussian Front, seizing bridgeheads on the western bank of the Sozh River.

On October 5, the Stavka transferred the 13th Army of N.P. Pukhov and the 60th Army of I.D. Chernyakhovsky to the Voronezh Front, renamed the 1st Ukrainian. In a conversation about the transfer of armies, Rokossovsky once again raised the question of the possibility of a strike by the Central Front on Kyiv, but Stalin

refused to reconsider the already taken decision. Rokossovsky's front was supposed to strike the main blow in the Gomel direction.

"In order to hide the regrouping from the enemy," wrote Rokossovsky, "the army commander left one corps in the interfluvium with the task of disturbing the Nazis more, attracting their attention.

The 19th Rifle Corps, led by General D. I. Samarsky, brilliantly completed this task. The success of the entire front now depended on the actions of the 65th Army. Therefore, we gave it all the front-line means of reinforcement. In order to divert the attention of the enemy from the direction of our main attack, the 50th and 3rd armies were ordered on October 12 to go on the offensive in their sectors. With pain in

I set these tasks with my heart, knowing the limited means available to Boldin and Gorbachev, but this was necessary in the common interest, and some sacrifices had to be consciously made.

P. I. Batov recalled: "Practicing the tasks of the Gomel-Rechitsa operation with the army commanders, K. K.

Rokossovsky told us that the enemy had a strong line and success needed a bold maneuver and the ability to deceive the enemy command. He expressed a bold plan: demonstrating the concentration of large forces in one sector of the front (the armies of I. I. Fedyuninsky and V. Ya. Kolpakchi north of Gomel), to prepare and strike in a completely different direction (from the Loevsky bridgehead - the 65th and 61st armies).

Lieutenant-General N. A. Antipenko cites the story of Konstantin Konstantinovich himself about how in December 1943, while in Moscow, he was invited by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief to dinner. The occasion was more than suitable: both Stalin and Rokossovsky were born on the same day - December 21.

"It was well after midnight from December 20 to December 21," the marshal recalled. - Some members of the Politburo were present. The atmosphere at the table was the most relaxed. Taking my hand, Stalin

he took me aside and said quietly: "Yes, we offended you greatly, comrade Rokossovsky ... Well, it happens ... Sorry ..."

Then we returned to the table. Someone proclaimed a toast to Stalin's health. Have a bite. Getting up from the table. The Supreme Commander approached me with a full glass of Khvanchkara (his favorite wine), made a toast in my honor and began to clink glasses with me so that the top edge of his glass would not be on a par with mine, but a little lower. I knew this Georgian custom expressing

special respect, and he hastened to lower his glass lower. Stalin repeated his technique, lowering his hand with a glass even lower, and I did the same. In the end, our glasses ended up on the floor. It made everyone laugh."

General A.V. Gorbatov did not accept the fact that his army would advance in a secondary direction. There was a conflict between him and Rokossovsky. Konstantin Konstantinovich V
memoirs wrote about Gorbatov as follows:

"Alexander Vasilyevich Gorbatov is an interesting person. A brave, thoughtful military leader, a passionate follower of Suvorov, he put surprise, swiftness, throws over long distances with access to the flank and rear of the enemy, when the armies became massive, and the fronts solid. To break through enemy positions, the forces of one army are no longer enough; one has to resort to operations of a huge scale, in which several fronts participate simultaneously. And now such a broad operation was being carried out, in which Gorbatov's army had a rather modest role to act in a secondary sector

And
divert enemy forces to themselves when the main grouping of the front strikes in a decisive direction.

Gorbatov - the old commander, having received the order to attack, made every effort to fulfill task. But the situation developed in such a way that his efforts did not lead to the results that he would like to achieve. And then the army commander stated with all frankness that his army was being used incorrectly by the front commander. I read his complaint and sent it to Headquarters.

Alexander Vasilyevich's misdeed only elevated him in my eyes. I made sure that this a really solid, thoughtful military leader, who is rooting for the task assigned to him. Because

there was no answer, I myself decided, in violation of established practice, to reveal all the cards to the army commander and fully explain to him the role of his army in a specific situation. Alexander Vasilyevich thanked me and assured me that the task would be carried out in the best possible way.

However, General Gorbatov's complaint, which I forwarded to Headquarters, apparently played its part.

role. Soon the Stavka began to inform us all more fully about its plans and the place of our troops in implementation of these plans.

And the commander Gorbatoev managed to show himself on the secondary sector of the front. Having seized the moment, the army led by him overturned the enemy with a sudden blow and crossed on his shoulders

Dnieper".

Many Soviet generals, including those who were lucky enough to leave the Gulag in the era of the "Beria Thaw," sought on the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War, first of all, glory, for which soldiers and officers were ready to lay countless lives. Glory was also sought by the former Kolyva prisoner Gorbatoev, whose memoirs in Novy Mir in the 1960s were a resounding success. On March 1, 1944, he wrote to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks G. M. Malenkov with a request to be transferred to another front:

"Dear comrade Malenkov!

Please excuse the inconvenience. He was forced to submit the report attached to this to the commander. I ask, if you consider it possible, to help the speedy translation. More desirable to Comrade. Popov M. M. (Baltic Front), I worked well with him and will give maximum help.

The report "personally to the commander of the troops of the first Belorussian Front, General of the Army Rokossovsky" said:

"I ask for your petition for my transfer to another front. My stay in your submission for five months has led me to the conclusion that your assessment of my work is biased. I came to this conclusion based on the following. My character is not adapted to long sitting on the defensive. I have always looked for all possible ways to take action, and it is not surprising that the operations carried out by the 3rd Army were carried out not on your orders, but on my initiative, as if asked, and even with difficulty.

These operations, undertaken as private - army with small divisions, had great success at first, but not backed up by you in time, inevitably fizzled out in their

further development. In conversations on the eve of the operation, there were often such

expressions on your part: "If there is success", "If you advance". This speaks for the fact that you did not believe in success, and therefore did not send the necessary reinforcements to the area of our operations in advance.

When the offensive stopped, you always threw undeserved reproaches at me and looked for

the culprits in the 3rd Army, and not in the front. I consider your usual accusations: "missed the moment", "dropped hands", "not sensibly assessed the situation", I consider undeserved, because they were not supported by facts. <...>

I went through a long and difficult path with the SZ Army, it won a certain place for itself in the Red Army. With the 3rd Army, I have hundreds of cases where I risked my life in order to achieve speedy and complete success. It is very difficult for me to leave it, but the interests of the cause demand that I leave your subordination.

I ask you to report my report to the People's Commissar of Defense.

Commander of the 3rd Army of the Guard, Lieutenant General Gorbатов.

As a result, Gorbатов and Rokossovsky reconciled, and Alexander Vasilyevich remained in command of the 3rd Army. In his memoirs, Gorbатов spoke about the finale of the conflict as follows: "So, in order to avoid vain

losses, we decided to go on the defensive, but the front commander did not agree with this. He

categorically demanded to continue the offensive on Bobruisk. We broke up for the first time

opinions with

such an authoritative and respected person in the troops. Moscow intervened. The Headquarters decided that we were right. I was afraid that after that our relations with K.K. Rokossovsky would deteriorate. But Konstantinovich is not like that. The front commander still treated me evenly and well. About the fact that they did not share the glory with Rokossovsky, Alexander Vasilyevich

chose to remain silent. The word "Stavka" here, of course, does not mean Malenkov, but Stalin. This time, Iosif Vissarionovich decided to support Gorbатов so that Rokossovsky would not be too

arrogant.

Rokossovsky in his memoirs, intentionally or unwittingly, due to aberration of memory, refers

culmination of his conflict with Gorbатов by an earlier time than it was on

himself

in fact, by the time when Gorbатов's army had not yet crossed the Dnieper. Apparently, Konstantin Konstantinovich really did not want to admit that Stalin sided with his subordinate. It is also characteristic that at least until March 1944, according to Rokossovsky's testimony, the Headquarters did not initiate the front commanders into the general plan of the campaign, and the front commanders did not initiate the army commanders into the plans of front operations. Undoubtedly

This

was done on the orders of Stalin. Iosif Vissarionovich believed that every general

Absolutely not

be sure to understand your maneuver. Secrecy considerations played a major role here. The larger circle of people will be privy to the plan of the

upcoming offensive, the greater the likelihood of information leaking to the enemy. Let us recall the incident with Major Reichel, the chief of staff of one of the

German divisions, in June 1942. Then he turned out to have documents revealing the concept of the Blue plan - the German general offensive in the south.

And these documents came to

command of the Red Army, since the major's plane landed by mistake in no man's land, the major was killed and his briefcase was captured.

But no less

important was

What

the army commander will know that if he advances in a secondary direction only to demonstrate and divert enemy forces from the direction of the main attack, then he

may not be too zealous in carrying out the offensive and will begin to spare his people.

Surprisingly, after such an acute conflict, Rokossovsky and Gorbатов retained

quite

normal human relations and spoke warmly about each other in their memoirs. Alexander Vasilievich served for a long time and successfully under the

command of Konstantin Konstantinovich. Rokossovsky was such a person that even in an acute conflict situation with subordinates he behaved in such a way that they

did not take offense at him. And he himself never harbored resentment.

Chapter Nine THE

LIBERATION OF BELARUS

Rokossovsky's troops, according to the plan of the Headquarters, were to play a major role in the liberation of Belarus, and then

Poland. Stalin did not

allow the commander to become the liberator of Kyiv, in particular, because he had far-reaching political views on him. According to the plan of the Supreme

Commander-in-Chief, Konstantin Konstantinovich was to take Warsaw, and then play a prominent political role in liberated Poland.

The Belorussian Front dealt the main blow from the Loevsky bridgehead across the Sozh River,

captured by the 65th Army. On November 10, the enemy defenses were broken through. In cooperation with the 48th Army, the 65th Army liberated Rechitsa. The 61st Army was approaching Gomel. On November 26, under the threat of encirclement, the Germans were forced to leave this city. But, in principle, the Gomel-Rechitsa operation of the Belorussian Front had an auxiliary character. It was designed to tie down German troops in Belarus and prevent their transfer to Kyiv, where the 1st Ukrainian Front dealt the main blow. Rokossovsky's troops completed their task - the enemy could not remove a single division from near Gomel.

But at the end of November, the Germans launched a counteroffensive near Kiev, capturing Zhytomyr. Stalin was extremely worried and annoyed. He ordered Rokossovsky to go to Vatutin's headquarters as a representative of the Headquarters, to understand the situation and take measures to repel the German counterattack. Vatutin was afraid that Rokossovsky had arrived to replace him, and made excuses that he would have long ago

answered the enemy blow for blow, but he was afraid of losing Kyiv and therefore preferred to defend himself. Konstantin Konstantinovich forced him to start active operations, convincing him that with those forces and funds allocated by the Stavka at the disposal of the 1st Ukrainian Front, there is nothing to be afraid of. Two tank armies and several tank corps should have been enough for a counterattack.

The next day, Rokossovsky returned to the Belorussian front. Here the failure befell the 65th Army. Rokossovsky recalled: "P. I. Batov, concentrating all his efforts on his left flank, overlooked that the enemy pulled up large forces against the right flank of the army, although we warned about this. The army commander caught on when the Nazis struck a strong blow, crushed the weak parts of the right flank and began to go to the rear of the main group of army troops. By decisive measures taken by the command of the army and the front, the threat was quickly eliminated, the enemy was stopped and went on the defensive. But the commander's infatuation with the easy advance of troops without sufficient reconnaissance and ignoring the warnings of the front headquarters about the impending danger cost a lot: we lost a significant territory in the parichi direction, which is very important for us. It should be noted that at that time the enemy often practiced luring our units, staging his hasty withdrawal in order to later strike from the flanks. The insidiousness of the Nazis could not be forgotten even for a minute.

P. I. Batov himself recalled this unpleasant episode:

"The 95th Corps was supposed to strike at Kalinkovichi from the Novinki - Nakhov - Vasilevichi area. Preparations for the attack were already over. But at this time, the front commander called.

"Where the hell are you flying on the right flank?" Why don't you have good cover there? You even left the enemy's bridgehead at the blown up railway bridge across the Berezina near Shatsilka.

- The offensive, comrade commander, is developing successfully, therefore the troops are moving ...

"Where are they going, Pavel Ivanovich?" You have to feel the enemy. Do you want to share the lot of Samson's army? He, too, in 1914, rushed headlong forward and ran into a counterattack. You are doing a poor job of scouting. Large enemy forces are concentrated in the areas of Shatsilka, Parichi, and Springs. Immediately take measures to secure the right flank.

From the tone of the commander's order, I realized that we had made a big miscalculation in the alignment of forces. Not meeting serious resistance on the right flank, they left one 37th Guards Division there. Along with it was the 46th light artillery brigade of Colonel S. G. Kolesnikov.

Urgently began to regroup forces. Kuzovkov led his corps to the right flank. By decision of the commander, the 172nd Pavlograd Rifle Division under Major General N.S. Timofeev was transferred to the Pruzhinishche area, and the 44th Guards Division under the command of Colonel N.V. Korkishko was transferred in the direction of Shatsilka.

Reinforcing the right flank with two divisions of the 95th Corps, we were late in time. The corps had low maneuverability, especially the 172nd division. It was jokingly called "bull". It was formed in Ukraine, and someone bothered to give bulls as a draft force to its rear and all artillery. The division slowly stretched to the planned line and did not have time to take up defense. On December 20, the enemy launched a strong counterattack from three directions. The Nazis concentrated three infantry and two tank divisions against the right flank of the 65th Army, brought up from Bobruisk and from other sectors. As we learned later, at the direction of the front to strengthen our

On the right flank,
on the right bank of the Berezina, on the line south of Parichi, the 73rd Rifle Division of the 48th Army advanced.
However, she
also did not have time to take up a strong defense. On the morning of December 21, there was a meeting of
this division
with a counterattacking enemy.

The Germans battered the 37th Rifle Division and the 46th Artillery Brigade and almost
captured the headquarters of the 95th Rifle Corps. By December 25, the enemy advanced by 25-30
kilometers before it was stopped.

On February 24, 1944, the Belorussian Front was renamed the 1st Belorussian Front and
Konstantin
Konstantinovich remained its commander.

On March 9, 1944, Konstantin Konstantinovich attended a meeting with Stalin in the Kremlin. It was also attended by
members of
the GKO and AI Antonov. It is possible that the reason for the call to

The stake was the conflict between Rokossovsky and Gorbatov. This time Konstantin Konstantinovich
I spent only half an hour in Stalin's office.

In March, Rokossovsky received the task of advancing in the direction of Bobruisk - Baranovichi - Warsaw, bypassing
Polesie from the north. Soon, the 1st Belorussky section was also included, covering Polesie from the south. Now, on a
front of 900
kilometers, there were ten combined arms, one tank and two air armies, as well as three tank, one
mechanized and three
cavalry corps and the Dnieper military flotilla.

The first major operation that Rokossovsky conducted as commander
new
the front was Rogachev-Zhlobinskaya. During it, the city of Rogachev was liberated and
captured
foothold on the right bank of the Dnieper. However, it was not possible to achieve significant success and break Army
Group Center at
that time.

The 1st Belorussian Front went on the defensive only on April 15, 1944. Prior to this, he continued ineffective attacks
in order to
prevent the transfer of German troops to Ukraine, where the Soviet troops were to achieve decisive success. Then it was
time
to launch a general offensive in Belarus. By that time, the "Belarusian balcony" was deeply covered from the
south and
southeast. Tempting opportunities were created to cut and encircle Army Group Center. The plan for this operation,
later called "Bagration",
was discussed

at a meeting with Stalin on April 24, 1944.

This meeting soon became known to the Germans. In the book of the famous British military

historian John Erickson's "Road to Berlin", published in 1983, is presented by Reinhard Gehlen from the department "Foreign Armies - East" to the General

Staff on May 3, 1944, a report by an unknown agent that two options for the summer Soviet were discussed at the Soviet Headquarters under the chairmanship of Stalin offensive. The first provided for the main attack in the Lvov-Kovel region with a simultaneous attack on Warsaw. According to the

second option, which was adopted as a result, the main blow was delivered in the direction of the Baltic, and in the course of it it was planned to capture Warsaw,

where an anti-German uprising of the Poles was expected. The auxiliary strike was planned to the south, in the direction of Lvov. It is easy to see that this is exactly

how the Soviet troops acted in the summer of 1944, when the main offensive - the famous Operation Bagration - led to the defeat of the Army Group Center

in Belarus and Lithuania and led the Red Army to the Vistula near Warsaw and to the Baltic coast on the outskirts of East Prussia. An auxiliary attack on Lvov made it possible to occupy Eastern Galicia and seize the Sandomierz bridgehead beyond the Vistula. The uprising in Warsaw, as expected

at the Headquarters, should have been led by the pro-Soviet People's Army (People's Army), which

much

inferior in number to the Homeland Army (Army of the Motherland), which was subordinate to the Polish government in exile in London.

Rokossovsky said:

"In an effort to stay in Belarus, the German command concentrated large forces there - Army Group Center, commanded by Field Marshal Bush (one tank and three field armies); part of the right-flank divisions of the 16th German Army from the North Army Group and tank divisions from the Northern Ukraine Army Group also operated in the zone of the upcoming offensive of our troops. In total, on the front from Sirofino to Kovel by June 23 there were 63 German divisions and

3 brigades, with a total number of 1 million 200 thousand people. The enemy had 9500 guns and mortars, 900 tanks and 1350 aircraft.

The 9th German Army was defending against the troops of the right wing of our front, it blocked our way to Bobruisk. The 2nd German Army took up defense over 400 kilometers in Polesie

-u against the center and left wing of the 1st Belorussian Front. In the Bobruisk direction, where four armies of the right wing of our front were to advance (3rd Lieutenant General A.V. Gorbatov, 48th Lieutenant General P.L. Romanenko, 65th Colonel General P.I. Batov and

28th Lieutenant General A. A. Luchinsky), the enemy had 131 thousand people, 5137 machine guns, about 2500 guns and mortars, 356 tanks and self-propelled guns. Enemy troops were covered from the air by 700 aircraft. In addition to tactical reserves, the enemy had operational reserves in the Brest and Kovel directions - up to ten infantry divisions. Consequently, a powerful fascist group was located against our front.

Rokossovsky proposed to deliver not one, but two main blows on his front. Konstantin

Konstantinovich recalled:

“The study of the terrain and the state of the enemy defenses convinced me that on the right wing of the front it was advisable to deliver two strikes from different sectors: one by the forces of the 3rd and 48th armies from the Rogachev area to Bobruisk, Osipovich, the other by the forces of the 65th and 28th army from the lower area flow

Berezina, Ozarichi in the general direction to Slutsk. And both blows should be the main ones. This

went against the established view, according to which during the offensive one main blow is delivered, for which the main forces and means are concentrated. Taking some

an unusual decision, we went for a certain dispersal of forces, but in the swamps of Polesye there was no other way out, or rather, we had no other way to the success of the operation.

The fact is that the terrain in the direction of Rogachev, Bobruisk made it possible to concentrate there at the beginning

offensive forces only of the 3rd Army and only partially of the 48th. If this grouping is not helped by a strike in another sector, the enemy could prevent a breakthrough of his defenses here, he would still have the opportunity to transfer forces here from the lines not attacked by us. Two main blows solved all

problems: the main grouping of troops of the right wing of the front was simultaneously introduced into the battle, which was unattainable in one sector due to

its comparative limitations; the enemy lost real opportunities for maneuver; the success achieved, even at first in one of these sectors, put the

German troops in a difficult situation, and provided our front with

energetic development of the offensive.

To this it must be added that the right flank of the 3rd Army rested on the area occupied by the enemy not only along the western, but also

along the eastern bank of the Dnieper. It forced

us

take appropriate measures to secure the right flank of the army and the front. The blow of the 65th and 28th armies on the left bank of the Berezina in the direction of

Bobruisk, Osipovichi deprived the enemy

possibilities

transfer their forces from this sector against the 3rd Army, and vice versa. By blows in two directions, the main grouping of forces of the right wing of the front was

simultaneously introduced into the battle,

what is impossible

was achieved with a blow in one area due to its comparative limitations. In addition, the success achieved in any of these areas put the enemy in a difficult

position, and ensured the successful development of the operation for the troops of the front.

At the meeting at Headquarters, the timing of the offensive was set for each front, the forces and means, as well as the time of their arrival, were determined.

Great importance was attached to the organization

close

interaction between fronts, especially between the 3rd (commanding general colonel

I. D. Chernyakhovsky) and the 1st Belorussian, to which the Headquarters assigned the main tasks. The troops of these fronts were to quickly advance to the west and

close their flanks to the west of Minsk, in order to then destroy the encircled enemy grouping.

The offensive plan was finally worked out at Headquarters on May 22 and 23. Our Considerations

O

the offensive of the troops of the left wing of the front in the Lublin direction were approved, but the decision on two strikes on the right wing was criticized. Supreme

Commander and his

deputies insisted on inflicting one main blow - from the bridgehead on the Dnieper (region

Rogachev), which was in the hands of the 3rd Army. Twice I was asked to go into the next room to think over the Stavka proposal. After each such "thinking

through", I had to defend my decision with renewed vigor. Convinced that I firmly insisted on our point of view, Stalin approved the plan of operation in the form in

which we presented it.

"The persistence of the commander of the front," he said, "proves that the organization of the offensive is carefully thought out. And this is a reliable guarantee of success."

Memory failed Konstantin Konstantinovich a little. This memorable meeting in Stalin's Kremlin office took place on May 26, 1944. It was attended by

members of the GKO, A. M. Vasilevsky, A. I. Antonov, S. M. Shtemenko, commanders of all fronts that were to participate in the Bagration operation, as well as L. 3. Mekhlis and commanders of the clans

troops. At this meeting, the final plan of the operation was approved. It was supposed to start on June 19, but, as always, they did not have time with the concentration of troops and supplies. Therefore, reconnaissance in force was carried out on June 22, and the general offensive began on June 23.

Before that, on May 25, Stalin, judging by the composition of those invited, also discussed the plan for Operation Bagration, only Rokossovsky was not at this meeting. It was attended, in addition to members of the GKO, G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevsky, A.I. Antonov, S.M. Shtemenko, commanders of the military branches N.N. Yakovlev (head of the GAU of the Red Army), Ya. N. Fedorenko (commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the Red Army), A. A. Novikov (commander of the Air Force of the Red Army), as well as the head of GlavPUR A. S. Shcherbakov. Obviously, Bagration was discussed on the first day at the level of the General Staff and the commanders of the military branches, primarily from the point of view of what forces and means may be required to carry out the operation. On the second day, together with the commanders of the fronts, they resolved questions about the tasks of the fronts and armies, including

directions of strikes and the expected progress on the days of the operation. And on May 22 and 23, Stalin

He received not high-ranking Soviet military men, but Wanda Wasilewska, Tadeusz Wasilewski, Kazimir Sidor, Jan Stefan Moravsky (Galiman), Marian Spychalsky and other leaders of the pro-Soviet Union of Polish Patriots and the Home Rada of the People. The day before, May 21, Stalin

met with Zygmunt Berling, the future commander of the 1st Army of the Polish Army. Obviously, these meetings reinforced Stalin's exaggerated ideas about the strength of the Polish

communists and their ability to lead the uprising in Warsaw when the Soviet troops approached the Polish capital.

The commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Ernst Busch, was seriously afraid that What

the extended front of his troops will not withstand a new powerful Soviet strike. Therefore, on May 20, when visiting Headquarters, he asked for permission to withdraw troops to the Dnieper or even the Berezina, which allowed

would reduce the front by more than 200 kilometers and condense the battle formations of the defenders. However, Hitler rejected this proposal. The Führer understood that both the landing of the Allies in France and a new big offensive of the Red Army should follow in the coming weeks. The withdrawal to the Dnieper did not prevent the threat of encirclement of Army Group Center and did not solve the problems in a fundamental way, especially since the most combat-ready tank divisions had to be transferred to the West. There, Hitler still had a glimmer of hope that during the landing it would be possible

apply

defeat the Anglo-American troops and throw them into the sea.

Theoretically, Hitler could have prevented the defeat of the Wehrmacht in Belarus, if only in May

authorized the withdrawal of Army Group Center. However, they would have to retreat not to the Berezina, but at least to the Bug, and even to the Vistula.

In this case, the Red Army could be at the borders of Germany by the beginning of June. But Hitler no longer fought for victory, but only for gaining time, hoping either

to split the coalition opposing him, or to invent a "wonder weapon" that could radically change the course of the war. And to gain time, it was necessary to hold

the territory. From the point of view of gaining time, even the loss of significant German forces in Belarus was justified, since thereby the advance of the Red Army to

the borders of the Reich was delayed by at least one and a half to two months and there was at least some chance to repel the Allied landing. Therefore,

Hitler forbade the withdrawal of German troops and, despite the risk of encirclement, decided to defend himself on the former lines.

Army Group Center's only hope lay in the SS Panzer Corps stationed in Poland. His divisions could launch a counterattack against the Soviet troops in the event of their offensive both in the Kovel and Lvov-Sandomierz directions, and in Belarus. This would delay the advance of the attackers and would give at

least part of the troops of Army Group Center a chance to avoid death. In mid-June, the SS corps was to conduct a large-scale reconnaissance in battle

near Kovel. However, already on June 11, five days after the landing

allies in

Normandy, when it became clear that they could not be thrown into the sea and the battles were taking on a protracted character, three SS Panzer

divisions went to France. Here they suffered heavy losses from Anglo-American aircraft, but helped to stabilize the front until the end of July. There was nothing to

help Army Group Center.

According to the plan of Operation Bagration, four armies of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front were to encircle and destroy the Bobruisk grouping,

capture the cities of Bobruisk, Glusha, Glusk, and then advance on the Bobruisk-Minsk and Bobruisk-Baranovichi directions. The troops of the left wing

went on the offensive only after the encirclement of the German troops in the Minsk region and the withdrawal of the troops of the right wing to the line of

Baranovichi.

P. I. Batov recalled:

"In the second half of May, the front commander summoned all the commanders to the Military Council in Gomel. He made a short report. The operation under the code name "Bagration", said K.K. Rokossovsky, is planned by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command as

one of
the main attacks on the Soviet-German front. The 1st Baltic Front in the Vitebsk direction, the 3rd Belorussian front in the Orsha direction, the 2nd Belorussian front in the Mogilev direction and the 1st Belorussian front in the Bobruisk direction will take part in it.

Data on the balance of forces on the scale of the entire operation: in infantry on our side we have a twofold superiority, and in equipment - three to four times. There were over 5,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, 5,000 aircraft, and 31,000 guns and mortars against the enemy's 10,000.

Rokossovsky said that the Headquarters instructed Marshals A. M. Vasilevsky and G. K. Zhukov to coordinate the actions of the fronts.

The troops of the front were given the following task: to defeat the enemy grouping in the area of Bobruisk with the right wing and reach the Pukhovichi-Slutsk-Osipovichi line; with the left wing to pin down the enemy and prepare for an offensive in the Lublin direction. In front of our strike force, the Germans had 14 divisions of the 9th Army, 2600 guns and 110 tanks.

Commander's decision: to break through the German defenses with two strike groups operating in converging directions. Two armies advance from the north to Bobruisk, Osipovichi - the 3rd and 48th, Bakharev's tank corps enters the gap. From the south-west, the 65th and 28th armies and the mechanized cavalry group of I. A. Pliev strike at Osipovichi, the Don Tank Corps (our constant and faithful ally!) Is introduced into the gap and, together with the tankers of General Bakharev, cuts the escape routes enemy to the west.

Rokossovsky fought against extrajudicial executions. Here is a wonderful document proving this - a directive issued on May 27, 1944 by the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front in connection with egregious cases of arbitrariness of commanders at all levels, which entailed tragic consequences. It appeared immediately after the final approval of the plan for Operation Bagration.

The directive read:

"The commander of the 12th division of our front, Colonel Gavilevsky, during the last battles, without a detailed analysis of the case, without trial, shot the commander of the battalion, Major Durnov. During the war, Major Durnov was awarded the Orders of Suvorov 3rd class, the Order of the Red Banner and the Order of the Red

Stars and is characterized as a brave and competent officer. This shameful case for the front is not

single. The Military Council of the front strongly condemned the actions of Gavilevsky and brought him to trial by the Military Tribunal.

Some officers, even from the top command staff, still do not understand that

What

by unauthorized execution, arbitrariness, gross violation of the law, they do not strengthen military discipline, but, on the

contrary, undermine it, that such actions do not raise the authority of the commander in the eyes of his subordinates,

but, on the contrary, undermine his authority, discredit and disgrace the commanders who admit these facts.

It is also completely unacceptable that higher commanders in the armies, formations and units are not adequately

combating the facts of unauthorized reprisals and do not prevent such cases.

Party and political bodies in units, formations and armies also do not fight these shameful phenomena.

The Military Council of the front demands from all generals, officers and political workers to eradicate cases of unauthorized

executions without trial and other facts of arbitrariness in relations between servicemen.

The military councils of the armies, the commanders of formations and units to explain and demand from the officers the strict

observance of the statutory provisions on the order of official relations between the commander and his subordinates.

Remind officers and unit commanders that the use of weapons is permissible only in extreme cases, provided for by order

of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 (strictly speaking, this order

Not

interpreted too accurately the circumstances under which the commander could use weapons according to

attitude towards subordinates; it only stated: "Alarmists and cowards must be exterminated on the spot.

From now on, the

iron law of discipline for every commander, Red Army soldier, political worker should be the requirement - not a step back without an order from the high command. The commanders of a company, battalion, regiment, division, the

corresponding commissars and political workers, retreating from a combat position without an order from above, are

traitors to the Motherland. WITH

such

commanders and political workers and should be treated as traitors to the Motherland. - B. S.), only in a difficult combat situation and only in order to ensure and compel the performance of combat

tasks.

Commanders and political agencies, not leaving a single case of unauthorized execution without a thorough investigation, warning these facts in every possible way and immediately reporting them to the Military Council

front.

The prosecutor of the front should direct the work of military prosecutors to eradicate cases of arbitrariness in the troops, to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The directive was followed by a special letter about the unauthorized executions of a member of the military advice

1st Belorussian Front N. A. Bulganin, addressed to G. M. Malenkov. There noted:

"... The military prosecutor's office collected data on the facts of unauthorized executions at the front. It was established that during the period from January 1 to May 1, 1944, there were 30 cases of unauthorized executions, of which: 3

Armies - 1, 70-4 each, 47-5 each, 48-6 each, 65-6 each, 69-8 each.

The facts were as follows:

"On April 1, 1944, at the observation post of the 132nd division of Colonel Gavilevsky, the commander of the 2nd rifle

battalion of the 498th rifle regiment, Major Durnov, was shot under the following circumstances:

2nd Rifle Battalion 498 Rifle Regiment 6. [U-44 was on the defensive. His neighbors were: on the right - 1 sb 498 spi on the left -

1 sb 712 sp. At 16 o'clock. 30 min. 6. The main enemy, after artillery preparation, went on the offensive in the area of the first battalion

498 joint ventures and the first battalion 712 joint ventures. As a result of the offensive undertaken, both battalions

were driven off their lines and became in disarray.

retreat, as for the 2nd battalion of 498 joint ventures, commanded by Major Durnov, the latter firmly held his line. All attacks on the sector of this battalion were repulsed.

Without communication with the regiment and neighbors for an hour and a half and ignorance due to this

situation, Major Durnov decided to go personally to the regimental command post to clarify the situation and report. The command of the battalion shifted to his deputy for

combat
unit Major Sorokin.

The enemy, taking advantage of the withdrawal of the first battalion of 498 rp and the first battalion of 712 rp, covering the flanks of the 2nd battalion, after the departure of Durnov, who did not know the situation, cut off the battalion from the rest of the forces of the regiment and division, as a result of which Durnov could not return to his battalion.

At 19.00, the head of divisional intelligence, Major Skvortsov, reported the situation to the division commander Gavilevsky by radio, saying that the 2nd battalion was surrounded, and the battalion commander, Major Durnov, was at the location of the 1st battalion.

Colonel Gavilevsky, not knowing the situation and the reason for Major Durnov being in the 1st battalion, ordered Major Skvortsov by radio to immediately shoot Major Durnov for cowardice and alarmism. But since Major Durnov was at the command post of the regiment commander, Skvortsov did not comply with the order of the division commander, which he reported to Colonel Gavilevsky.

Gavilevsky conveyed his order to shoot Major Durnov to the regiment commander Chizhevsky. The regiment commander Chizhevsky did not comply with this order and sent Major Durnov to the division.

Major Durnov arrived at the division at about 20.00 and tried to report the situation to the division commander Gavilevsky and asked to sort it out. Gavilevsky refused to listen to Major Durnov's report and ordered the sergeant of the commandant's platoon Kharlov, as well as his adjutant Senior Lieutenant Telegin, to shoot Major Durnov. Durnov was shot.

Before the execution, Durnov asked to remove orders from him. Durnov was awarded three orders: the Red Star, the Red Banner and the Order of Suvorov 3rd class. However, this was refused to him.

Division commander Gavilevsky was removed from his post by the Military Council and put on trial.

2. April 3 the commander of a platoon of anti-tank rifles 339 of a separate anti-tank battalion, junior lieutenant Sviridenko, being on fire

positions, organized a booze with his subordinates. While drinking, the enemy fired artillery fire at the battle formations.

Junior Lieutenant Sviridenko ordered Corporal Ivanov, who participated in this booze, to take up firing positions.
Ivanov, being drunk, was unable to carry out Sviridenko's order. Then Sviridenko shot him.

By the verdict of the Military Tribunal, Sviridenko was sentenced to 8 years in prison with the application of note 2 to Art. 28 of the Criminal Code, i.e. with sending to the front in penal units.

3. On the night of April 12 with. Private of the 2nd Company of the 1st Rifle Battalion of the 110th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 38th Guards Division Kadzhiev was found sleeping at his post. The commander of the company, Lieutenant Kubyshko, having learned about this, called Kadzhiev to him and, having established that Kadzhiev really slept at his post, decided to shoot Kadzhiev in front of the formation and immediately carried out his decision.

By the verdict of the Military Tribunal, Kubyshko was sentenced to 7 years in prison with the application of note 2 to Art. 28 of the Criminal Code, i.e. with sending to the front in penal units.

4. April 3 The foreman of the household platoon of the 2nd battalion of the 113th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 38th Guards Rifle Division Demidkin, following to the forefront, found a resting fighter with a bandaged head on a forest path. Demidkin decided to check, really whether this soldier is wounded. When the fighter removed the bandage from his head, Demidkin established that there was no head injury. Immediately Demidkin shot this fighter.

By the verdict of the Military Tribunal, Demidkin was sentenced to 8 years in prison with the note of Art. 28 of the Criminal Code with the direction to the penal units to the front.

5. April 15 p. signalmen of the 1st rifle battalion of the 1297th rifle regiment of the 160th rifle division under the command of the communications platoon commander Kozlov worked on the wiring of the telephone line. Kozlov felt sick and went to the farm to rest, leaving his subordinates at work. Senior Lieutenant Tatarintsev, deputy commander of the battalion, came to the farm and, finding Kozlov sleeping, began to beat him, and then killed Kozlov with a pistol shot. Tatarintsev was DRUNK.

Tatarintsev is brought to court by the Military Tribunal.

6. January 8 p. The assistant chief of staff of the 4th separate rifle battalion of the 115th separate rifle brigade, senior lieutenant Smurnikov, received an order from the brigade's chief of staff, Major Shekhter, to find out why ammunition was not being delivered to the 1st rifle company. Smurnikov went to the rear of the battalion and established that the foreman of the 1st company Bochkarev drunk drunk and fell asleep in the dugout and that therefore the delivery of ammunition to the company was not organized. Smurnikov summoned Bochkarev to his place and shot him with a pistol.

Smurnikov is put on trial.

7. Deputy commander of the 220th joint venture of the 4th rifle division for political affairs, Major Grishchenko

February 1, p. with two shots from a pistol, he killed the foreman of the household platoon of the 2nd battalion of the 101st joint venture Bannykh. Grishchenko was drunk. Being engaged in the placement of the headquarters of the regiment, he drove the Bannys several times from one house to another. When Bannykh came to fetch his things, Grishchenko cursed him and pushed him into the passage, and then took a pistol from his orderly and killed Bannykh with two shots.

Grishchenko was convicted.

8. February 5 p. The deputy commander of the 2nd battalion 471th joint venture 73rd division, senior lieutenant Moisa, on the orders of the battalion commander, senior lieutenant Sadykov, shot the commander of the 4th company of the same regiment, Lieutenant Shevchenko, who was seriously wounded on the battlefield, who was suspected of cowardice. The investigation established that Shevchenko did not show any cowardice.

Sadykov was convicted.

February 9.6 p. the commander of the 307th Rifle Division, Major General Enshin, personally shot and. O.

Chief of Artillery 1019 joint venture Captain Barankov. An administrative penalty was imposed on Enshin by the Military Council of the Army.

10. In February with. and in March with. in 188 separate penal company had three cases

illegal

execution of the Red Army penalized by the company commander Lieutenant Kashtanov. Three fighters were shot because they lagged behind the company at the time of the march to their original positions.

Kashtanov is brought to trial by the Military Tribunal.

11. On January 9, Major Demchenko, assistant chief of the 1st department of the headquarters of the 60th Sevskaya Rifle Division, shot the commander of the 2nd mortar company of the 2nd Rifle Battalion of 1481 Rifle Division, Senior Lieutenant Kuts. The circumstances of the shooting are as follows.

Kuts, in a state of extreme intoxication, came to the regiment commander, Major Shteptev, to receive a combat mission. Instead of removing him from command of the company, he was ordered to go to the unit for a combat mission. Instead of mortar fire control

batteries, Kuts ended up in the forest in the rear of the battle formations of his company and did not control the battle. Major

Demchenko discovered him in the forest. Having contacted the commander of the 60th Rifle Division, Colonel

Bogoyavlensky, Major Demchenko reported to him about the behavior of Kuts. Colonel Bogoyavlensky gave the order to shoot

Kuts. The last one was shot.

12. January 21 p. The commander of the 372nd joint venture of the 218th rifle division, lieutenant colonel Ryabov, shot the commander of the machine-gun company of the 2nd battalion, Lieutenant Mitrofanov. When Lieutenant Colonel Ryabov came to the company to check the combat readiness of the unit, he found people, including Mitrofanov, sleeping, there was no combat guard, machine guns were not guarded, platoon commanders were not on the ground.

Ryabov tried to wake Mitrofanov, but the latter did not get up. With two shots at close range, Ryabov shot Mitrofanov (the lieutenant colonel, it seems, did not even bother to wake his victim. - B.V.

On January 22, Ryabov himself was seriously wounded and evacuated to the rear by plane.

The above facts show that arbitrariness and unauthorized executions have become widespread. In order to resolutely combat these shameful facts, the Military Council of the front issued the attached directive.

Accordingly, political agencies are focused on preventing these criminal cases.

and members

military councils of the armies.

The increased concentration of unauthorized executions in penal units is striking - in one company alone, three out of thirty victims were shot along the entire 1st Belorussian Front.

The generals did not fall into penal units, shot them extremely rarely and almost exclusively in

1941. Misdemeanors for which lieutenants and captains went straight to the penal battalion,

for senior
officers often ended in mere reprimands or removal from office.

Here is another unauthorized execution, which had a completely different outcome than those listed above, only because its
defendant was a general, and even enjoyed the patronage of Zhukov himself. On this occasion, the head of the Main Directorate of
Personnel of the Red Army, Colonel General

F. I. Golikov wrote to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU G. M. Malenkov on April 30, 1944: "Marshal of the Soviet Union comrade. Zhukov (encrypted No. 117 396 dated April 28 this year) reported to the People's Commissar of Defense
Marshal of the Soviet Union comrade. Stalin about the personal execution by the commander of the 18th rifle corps, Major
General Afonin, the head of the 237th rifle division, Major Andreev. I present to you on this subject a copy of my report on

the name of Comrade
Stalin."

Golikov had reported to Stalin the day before, on April 29:

"Marshal Zhukov reported to you about the personal execution by the commander of the 18th rifle corps, Major General
Afonin, of the head of the Intelligence Department of the 237th rifle division, Major Andreev (Afonin's corps was part of the 1st
Ukrainian Front, commanded by Zhukov. - RB.S.).

Despite the fact that this unauthorized execution was committed on April 12, g., the report was made only on April 28, i.e., after 16 days.

Contrary to the petition of Marshal Zhukov - not to bring Afonin to the court of the Military Tribunal,
A
limit yourself to measures of public and party influence, I beg you to bring Afonin to justice.

If, contrary to all charters, orders of the Supreme High Command and the principles of the Red Army, General Afonin considers
it permissible for himself to hit a Soviet officer, then he can hardly count on the fact that every officer of the Red Army
(and even
more so a combat officer)
can stay
after such a physical and moral insult and shock within the discipline, so
ugly and easily violated by the general himself.

In addition, after the murder of Andreev, one can hardly take on faith the reference of General Afonin that Andreev tried to strike again and
behaved boldly. As for

positive

the qualities of General Afonin, because of which Marshal Zhukov asks the latter not to judge,

That

Colonel-General Chernyakhovsky gave me the following description of Afonin (orally) the other day: a lightweight, arrogant gentleman, intolerant in his treatment of people; does not know artillery and

cannot organize interaction on the battlefield; not studying; braggart, man of crackling phrases.

Tov. Chernyakhovsky (commander of the 60th Army, which included Afonin's corps. - B.S.) (according to him) expressed all this about Afonin personally to Marshal Zhukov.

Marshal Zhukov Afonin worked as a guarantor at the beginning of 1943 and at the group headquarters at [101

Khalkhin-Gole" x - ^.

Interestingly, in his memoirs, Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov gave Ivan Mikhailovich Afonin a completely different description. Recalling the battles at Khalkhin Gol, he wrote: "Before dawn on July 3

(1939. - B.S.) senior adviser to the Mongolian army, Colonel I.M. cover of night across the Khalkhin-Gol River, attacked units of the 6th

Cavalry Division of the MPR. Taking advantage of the superiority in strength, before dawn on July 3, they captured Mount Bain-

Tsagan and the areas adjacent to it. The 6th Cavalry Division of the MPR withdrew to the northwestern sections of Mount Bain-Tsagan.

Assessing the danger of the new situation, Ivan Mikhailovich Afonin immediately arrived at the command post of the commander of the

Soviet troops ... and reported on the current situation on Mount Bain-Tsagan. It was clear that in connection with the unorganized

withdrawal of the 6th Mongolian cavalry division in this area, no one could block the path of the Japanese grouping to strike at the

flank and rear of the main grouping of our troops.

Here Ivan Mikhailovich appears as an intelligent commander, able to correctly assess the situation. And you won't think that this is an arrogant person who is not able to organize command and control of the troops, but who is capable of hitting or even shooting a subordinate for no reason. From a letter

Golikov's picture of the incident becomes clearer: Afonin went for something in the face of Andreev, the major could not stand it and hit

back. Then the gallant general, apparently, realized that he could not defeat the big scout in hand-to-hand combat, grabbed a revolver and shot

the obstinate on the spot.

Zhukov stood up for Afonin, perhaps also because shortly before, in March 1944, on the 1st Ukrainian Front, which he took over after Vatutin was wounded, he had

exactly the same incident, fortunately, ended not so tragically. The head of the engineering troops of the front, General B. V. Blagoslavov, recalled how

Zhukov, having just taken command, gathered the commanders at night for a meeting. There, on the basis of brief reports, he alone was ready

present for awards, remove others from their posts, put others on trial, and simply shoot the fourth. At the same time, the marshal widely used untranslatable

Russian expressions and to all

addressed exclusively to "you", although he had not drunk with anyone before. Blagoslavov

Zhukov immediately did not like it. When the general asked to address him without swearing and threats, the marshal drew his Mauser. Blagoslov grabbed his

parabellum in response. There was an awkward pause. Blagoslavov reminded Zhukov that he was waiting for his shot. This was not just a general, but a general

of engineering troops, a man much more educated than an ordinary infantry general, and who had a well-developed self-esteem.

But the duel did not take place. Zhukov realized that for the execution on the site of such a high-ranking

the general will not pat him on the head. This is not some regiment or even division commander. Georgy Konstantinovich holstered the Mauser and promised that he

would deal with Blagoslavov.

However, Zhukov did not get his hands on the obstinate general, perhaps the only one in the Red Army (others did not take it down silently).

Apparently,

the limits of his power did not extend to the extrajudicial removal from office of army commanders and those corresponding to them in the front

link.

Blagoslavov successfully ended the war in his former position on the 2nd Belorussian Front near Rokossovsky, with whom he had excellent relations, and participated as

standard-bearer in the famous Victory Parade on June 24, 1945 in Moscow. For lower ranks, like Major Andreev, such "resistance to evil by violence" usually ended in death.

I. M. Afonin also successfully fought until the end of the war, whom Zhukov saved from the tribunal. Ivan Mikhailovich ended the war in Prague as a lieutenant

general, Hero of the Soviet Union, commander of the 18th Guards Rifle Corps. He even went down in history by capturing Emperor Manchukuo Pu I

on August 19, 1945 in Mukden. On the day of the Victory Parade on Red Square, Lieutenant-General Afonin commanded a combined regiment of the 2nd Ukrainian Front.

German memoirists and historians assess the defeat of Army Group Center in Belarus as one of the most catastrophic events in the history of the German Eastern Front. The former commander of the German 4th Army, General Kurt Tippelskirch, recalled:

"At the front of the Army Group Center, the intentions of the enemy began to be clarified by about 10 June.

It was here, where the German command least expected an offensive, that evidently began to appear signs of major Russian preparations.

Radio intelligence

reported new armies; aviation noted an increase in rail traffic and heavy traffic on highways. As always, the AIR divisions, which worked perfectly, established

that large forces of the Russian artillery deployed here began to zero in on a number of sectors of the front of the German army group.

Prisoners

reported the appearance behind enemy lines of "strike units". In the so-called "defensive areas", which were still held by less combat-ready units,

noted

replacement of the latter by strong compounds. A few more days passed, and it became quite obvious to the command of Army

Group Center that the enemy was

deploying large forces on this front. In addition, the direction of the upcoming attacks on Bobruisk, Mogilev, Orsha and Vitebsk began to clearly emerge.

The picture of the enemy's preparations obtained as a result of comparing the most diverse observations was so definite and clear that there was absolutely

no room for the possibility of imitations and misleading. On June 14, a meeting was held at the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces with the participation

of all the chiefs of staff of army groups and armies. While the chiefs of staff of Army Group North and both southern groups unanimously reported that on their front there

were no signs of preparations for the soon-to-be-anticipated Russian offensive, the chiefs of staff of Army Group Center were equally unanimous in pointing

to the already almost completed the deployment of large Russian forces in front of the front of their armies. However, in the General Staff of the Ground Forces,

Hitler was so deeply rooted - which was facilitated in no small measure by the categorical point of view of Model, who led the front in Galicia - a

preconceived notion about the greatest likelihood of a Russian offensive on the front of the Northern Ukraine Army Group that they were already

abandoning it. could not".

In fact, as we have already seen, Hitler knew from the beginning of May that the Red Army was going to strike the main blow in Belarus with the task of reaching the borders of East Prussia,

an auxiliary strike - in the Lvov-Sandomierz direction with a simultaneous anti-German uprising in Warsaw. This was evidenced by a report received from a reliable source.

behind the front line. But the Fuhrer could not directly say that after the Allied landing in Normandy, when the only reserve of the Eastern Front, the SS Panzer Corps, had to be transferred

from

Poland to France, where most of the Luftwaffe went, has no choice but to sacrifice Army Group Center. It was precisely in the general situation on the Eastern

front and wider - in the general strategic position of Germany, pressed from all sides. In any case, on June 14, Hitler could no

longer help Army Group Center in any way: all the reserves of the ground forces and the main forces of fighter aircraft were abandoned to repel the landing in Normandy.

In Russian historiography, the idea of the landing in Normandy and the subsequent offensive of the Allies to the Elbe has long been formed as almost an easy walk, then

How

the main power of the Wehrmacht continued to remain on the Soviet-German front, which played a decisive role in the collapse of

Germany in World War II. At the same time, many facts are forgotten that are well known to specialists, but often unknown

to the general public. So, both German and Western commanders, including Montgomery and Eisenhower, rightly note that on the

Western Front the density of German troops, weapons and equipment was two and a half times greater than on the Eastern Front,

which complicated the task of the Allies. In addition, at the disposal of the Germans in the West were, albeit unfinished, but

consisting of long-term fortifications, the Atlantic

shaft and

the Siegfried line, while in the East such fortifications were available only in East Prussia. In addition, selected German troops

immediately fought against the Allies who landed in Normandy: the SS Panzer Corps, the West Panzer Group, which consisted of training tank units (later the 5th Panzer Army), the parachute army, etc. In just two months fighting in Normandy, from

June 6 to August 11, 1944, American, British and Canadian troops

lost about 170 thousand killed, wounded and missing. The Germans during this period, according to various estimates, lost from 200 to 300 thousand people.

On June 6, 1944, on D-Day, 288 German fighters were deployed in the West, and 550 in the East. Another 250 fighters were in the

Mediterranean, the Balkans and Norway, a 1179

machines were part of the Reich air defense system, which fought almost exclusively with the Anglo-American

aviation. On June 22, the day the Soviet offensive in Belarus began, only 441 fighters remained on the Eastern Front, 704 on the Western Front, 338 in other theaters, and 538 in German air defense. As German memoirists note, it was the complete absence of the Luftwaffe in the air that led to such a quick defeat of Army Group Center, aggravated by the overwhelming superiority of Soviet troops in tanks. We like to be reminded that

allies in

The Normandy had almost a tenfold superiority in aviation and a threefold superiority in tanks. At the same time, however, they forget that the first weeks of the fighting, the Allied aircraft had to be based across the English Channel and interruptions in the supply of fuel and ammunition seriously reduced their superiority.

It was the opening of the second front that sharply increased German losses not only in the West, but also in Russia. Stalin's favorite writer Konstantin Simonov, in his later life, in the comments to his war diaries, admitted: "A decisive change in the ratio between losses and the results of the battles ... comes in the summer of 1944." Prior to this, excluding Stalingrad, the Red Army took only thousands of Germans prisoner (most of all, 12 thousand - in the Korsun-Shevchenkovsky pocket in

February 1944). After the landing in Normandy, more than 50 thousand prisoners in

Belarus in July 1944 and 180 thousand prisoners in the Iasi-Kishinev pocket in August the same

of the year. We can safely say that it was the opening of the Western Front, where a third of the German ground forces were diverted, that played a decisive role in the Soviet successes of the last year of the war. During this period, the Eastern Front practically lost German aviation and any reserves that would minimize the consequences of Soviet strikes.

Tippelskirch said:

"In fact, Army Group Center after the transfer of the 4th Panzer Army in the Kovel region of one corps, in which since the deblockade of this city there was most of its tanks and

a significant number of troops, had only 38 divisions to defend its 1100-kilometer front, of which 34 were used. Only three infantry divisions, including one almost not combat-ready, and one tank division were in reserve. Since the enemy, throughout

likely intended to attack simultaneously all the armies of the group, with the exception of, perhaps, the 2nd Army, the command of the group could not count, as was the case the previous winter, that it would be possible to organize

reliable defense in threatened points. For a number of months, the commanders of the armies unsuccessfully interceded with the command of the group, and the latter with Hitler

o

permission to reduce the front line. Along the Dnieper, the steep western bank of which was inaccessible to tanks for a considerable distance, the 4th Army, from the autumn of 1943, equipped a defensive line between Bykhov and Orsha. In addition, for a number of months, against the will of Hitler and with the tacit consent of the command of the army group, another line along the Berezina was being equipped. The evacuation of the remaining bridgehead on the Dnieper would make a significant part of the army's front almost impregnable and at the same time lead to a considerable saving of forces. Even more effective would be a well-prepared withdrawal of troops to the Bobruisk-Polotsk line, undertaken immediately before the start of the Russian offensive, which would create a direct, significantly shortened front, and the deployment of enemy forces would immediately be devoid of any effect.

The commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Bush, could not defend his point of view before Hitler.

At the end of

May, he made an attempt to point out the discrepancy between the length of the front line and the number of troops and to achieve a change in the task of the army group, which obliged him to hold and defend the line he occupied, met with

sharp opposition. Hitler cynically asked Bush if he was one of those generals who constantly look back. After that, Bush submitted

to the will of Hitler and proceeded to fulfill the latter's order to throw all his forces into equipping the front lines.

Not wanting,

apparently, to run into new

trouble, Bush did not renew his attempts to reach a different solution until, by mid-June, the extent of enemy preparations

on the front of this army group had become quite definite. Probably, after all, the command did not assume that the enemy

would launch an offensive here with large forces and with such broad goals, as it turned out several

days later, and therefore their own chances for defense were clearly overestimated. The last uncertainty regarding

the timing of the start of the offensive dissipated on June 20, when the partisans undertook major sabotage on the Pinsk-Luninets,

Borisov-Orsha and Molodechno-Polotsk railways, that is, just on the communications of Army Group Center.

However, with the superiority in forces that the Red Army had during Operation Bagration, even the withdrawal of the main forces of Army Group Center to the line of the Dnieper could not

save

situation, just as later even the timely withdrawal of the garrisons from the "fortresses" of Mogilev, Vitebsk and Bobruisk did not save them from final destruction. The only difference would be

the size and location of the "boilers".

Only a few weeks before the Soviet offensive could save Army Group Center from destruction, a withdrawal to the Bug line with a simultaneous retreat of Army Group North to Riga or even to the border of East Prussia. But this option was absolutely

unacceptable for Hitler. Indeed, in this case, by the time the Allies landed in Normandy, Soviet troops would have been

standing at the borders of Germany and Poland occupied by the Germans. At the cost of the death of the main forces of

Army Group Center, this unpleasant event was postponed for a couple of months.

Tippelskirch described the start of the Soviet offensive thus:

"Between June 21 and 23, four Russian fronts launched an offensive on both sides of Vitebsk, on Orsha and Mogilev, as well

as north and south of Bobruisk, with the aim of crushing the defenses of Army Group Center. The Russian method of

conducting an offensive has become even more perfect since the last offensive operations. True, reconnaissance in force on the eve

of the offensive was preserved, but the actual offensive was now preceded by much more intense artillery fire for destruction

compared to previous operations, combined with an equally unusual use of large aviation forces. Probably, in order to

achieve the maximum power of air strikes, they were delivered at intervals of one day on each of the three German armies

defending in the decisive directions of the Russian offensive. Infantry formations that went over to the offensive after the end of artillery and aviation preparation were supported and covered by exceptionally effective air operations. This was done in

order to neutralize the German artillery, which had previously often managed to disrupt the offensive of the Russian troops.

Due to the small number of German aircraft - the 6th Air Fleet had only forty serviceable fighters - Russian air superiority

was now the same as that of their Western allies, although by absolute

numbers

Russian aviation could not even be approximately compared with the aviation of the allies. After the infantry had

completed the breakthrough, large tank forces were immediately introduced into it.

For the first time, Soviet aviation was able to truly achieve air supremacy. This was due to the fact that the main forces of the fighter and bomber aviation of the Luftwaffe were abandoned to repel the Allied landings in Normandy.

The 300-kilometer strip on which the 1st Belorussian Front was to advance was occupied by the 9th Army of Infantry

General Hans Jordan with headquarters in Bobruisk. It included the 35th Army Corps of Infantry General Friedrich Wiese,

the 41st Tank Corps of Artillery General Helmut Weidling, and the 55th Army Corps of Infantry General Friedrich Herrlein. In

reserve, the 9th Army had only the 20th Panzer and the low-combat capability 707th Security Division, located north of Bobruisk. This

reserve was clearly not enough to eliminate the deep breakthrough of the Soviet troops. And the command of the army group could

not help the 9th Army in any way, since the Soviet troops attacked almost the entire front of the Army Group Center. On June 1,

1944, there were only 442,053 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the army group of Field Marshal Bush, of

which only 258,604 served in combat units. 1st Belarussian

the front was opposed by 12 of the 38 divisions of Army Group Center, in which there were about 140

thousand soldiers, including about 82 thousand in combat units.

Rokossovsky, by the beginning of Operation Bagration, had 77 rifle, nine cavalry divisions, one mechanized corps, six tank corps, one

rifle brigade, two tank brigades, two self-propelled artillery brigades and four fortified areas. All of them were ready for offensive

operations without any restrictions and counted by June 23

1944 1,071,100 soldiers and officers. In addition, Rokossovsky had at his disposal the 1st Army of the Polish Army, which numbered

79,900 people in four infantry divisions, one cavalry and one tank brigades. It should also be taken into account that part of the forces of the 2nd Belorussian Front acted against the 9th German Army. But even without these divisions,

Rokossovsky's superiority over the enemy was overwhelming - 8.2 times in total numbers.

personal

composition.

Soviet aviation completely dominated the air. Colonel General Robert von Greim's 6th Air Fleet did not have a single bomber formation, since the bomber squadrons intended for operations on the central sector of the Eastern Front were being

reorganized. The request of the commander of the 9th Army, received after the start of the Soviet offensive, to allow the

retreat to the Dnieper, the command of the army group

On June 24,
it was rejected, demanding not to leave those sectors of the front that had not yet been
attacked
adversary.

On the same day, Soviet troops advanced from the area northwest of Rogachev in the direction of Bobruisk. The next day, there was a threat
of encirclement of
the corps occupying the defense in the Bobruisk area. Insufficiently quick use of the reserve 20th Panzer Division led to

replacement of General Jordan by General of the Panzer Forces Nikolaus von Forman. But even
if the reserve
had been put into action immediately, it would not have saved the situation.

On the evening of June 24, Bush demanded that the army group be allowed to withdraw beyond the Dnieper. Hitler rejected
This
proposal, allowing only a slight reduction in the front line east of the Dnieper. On June 25, the connection of the 9th Army with the 4th Army northwest
of Rogachev
was interrupted. A strike by the 1st Belorussian Front west of Bobruisk threatened to cut the communications of the 9th Army. On June 29,
the main forces of
the 9th Army were surrounded in the Bobruisk area.

General Tippelskirch recalled that on this day

“The General Staff of the Ground Forces understood the depth of the danger and recognized that the significance

of the ongoing events goes far beyond the scope of Army Group Center and calls for the adoption of cardinal decisions on the scale of
the entire Eastern
Front. There was only one
such

decision: to withdraw Army Group North, which was still defending on the Polotsk-Pskov-Peipsi Lake-Narva line, to the Daugavpils-Riga line, no
matter

how serious political considerations this may contradict. Behind such a large water barrier as the Western Dvina in its lower reaches, Army Group
North could manage with half of its forces, releasing an entire army at once. Only such a radical measure would have made it possible to prop up
the northern

wing of the Army Group Center, while its center could receive forces from the Northern Ukraine Army Group. As a result of the fact that
Hitler, in this case, too,
remained deaf to the voice of prudence, a new tragedy began in the history of the German army in the East: the struggle between Hitler

and all

leading army authorities for the timely withdrawal of Army Group North. Not a day went by that such a demand was not brought before Hitler in an
increasingly insistent form. Despite all these insistences, Army Group North, later renamed Army Group Courland, could not be saved from a
tragic fate. As a
result, she had to

to wage a heroic, but of little use, isolated struggle far from those areas where decisive events were unfolding, without having any opportunity to take part in the defense of the Reich. One of the most ardent supporters of the withdrawal of Army Group North beyond the Western Dvina was Field Marshal Model, who, while continuing to lead Army Group Northern Ukraine, replaced Field Marshal Bush as commander of Army Group Center on June 28.<...>

In early July, the fate of the 9th and 4th armies was decided. While at least part of the forces of the 9th Army (a total of about 15 thousand people), without heavy weapons and artillery, managed to connect with a tank division sent towards the northeast of Slutsk, weak forces, which the command of 4th The 1st Army hoped to cover the retreat of its corps to the Berezina, more and more retreated under enemy attacks from the flanks. West of the Berezina, the enemy launched attacks to the north from the Bobruisk region and to the south through Borisov, which proved impossible to hold after the withdrawal of the 5th Panzer Division. In order not to lose the last remnants of the troops and not finally open the road to Minsk, the 4th Army had to leave the Berezina.

And here is how W. Haupt described the defeat of the 9th German army:

“June 24, 1944, at 4.50, as expected, after an unusually strong artillery preparation for forty-five minutes along the entire front, the enemy went on the offensive. The attack was supported by a large number of attack aircraft: over the defense zone of the division

constantly

there were up to 100 aircraft that dealt particularly heavy damage to anti-tank and field artillery in positions. The plan for the destruction of reconnoitered

and probable enemy concentration areas was carried out. Communication lines were soon broken, and the division command found itself without wired means of communication with its regiments, neighboring divisions, and the command of the 41st Panzer Corps. To the enemy, who is still during the artillery preparation

many

sections broke into our trenches, with the support of tanks on the left flank of the division in two places

managed to penetrate deeply into our defenses. These breakthroughs, despite the use all

the division's reserves could not be eliminated.

An essential statement is that during artillery preparation, fire does not

was conducted according to

separate strips of swamps and hollows. Even during the cannonade, the forward detachments of the attackers advanced from the depths along them. Enemy divisions were advancing on a front wide of | up to 2 kilometers. Using this tactic, the enemy partially bypassed the trenches from the rear,

partially, not paying attention to anything, broke through into the depths of defense. Because the
our heavy

infantry weapons and artillery themselves at that time were under strong enemy artillery fire, and part of the resistance centers
was destroyed and
defeated, their return fire

did not bring the desired results.

On the right flank, the Russians also advanced with the support of tanks, broke through in a northwestern direction and soon approached artillery
firing positions
from three sides. By noon, she had already reached the second line of defense. The enemy was constantly pulling up new forces of infantry and tanks
from the
depths to the breakthrough areas.

Here Haupt notes that Rokossovsky's troops advanced tactically competently, infiltrating into gaps unoccupied by the enemy and
bypassing the trenches
and nodes of resistance.

Rokossovsky recalled how the Germans tried to break out of Bobruisk:

"In the afternoon of June 27, units of the 1st Guards Tank and 105th Rifle Corps attacked the enemy who had settled in the city, but
were unsuccessful. All night and all
the next day there were bloody battles. On the night of June 29, the enemy withdrew a significant part of the forces to the center and concentrated
large infantry
and artillery forces in the northern and northwestern parts of the city. The commandant of the German garrison decided to leave the city at
night and
break through to the northwest.

After a heavy artillery and mortar raid on the positions of our 356th rifle division, fascist tanks moved, followed by chains of assault
officer battalions, and then the
whole

infantry. Drunken soldiers and officers rushed forward, despite the destructive fire of our artillery and machine guns. Hand-to-hand fighting
ensued

in the darkness of the night. During
hour warriors

The 356th division fought heroically, holding back the onslaught of the enemy. At the cost of huge losses, the Nazis managed to penetrate
the
division's defenses in places.

At dawn, the forward detachments of the 48th Army, under the cover of artillery, crossed the Berezina and entered the battle on the eastern
outskirts
of Bobruisk.

By eight in the morning, the regiments of the 354th Infantry Division captured the station. The Germans, pressed on all sides, once again tried to
break out to the
northwest and again attacked the glorious 356th division. Them

managed to break through its defensive line. 5,000 soldiers, led by

was

commander of the 41st Panzer Corps, General Hoffmeister, but they failed to escape. Our troops, operating northwest of the city, liquidated these fleeing units of the enemy.

On June 29, the 65th Army, in close cooperation with the 48th Army, completely captured Bobruisk ... In six-day battles, we captured and destroyed 366 tanks and self-propelled guns, 2664

guns of various calibers. The enemy left on the battlefield up to 50 thousand corpses, more than 20 thousand

German soldiers and officers were taken prisoner.

As for the assault officer battalions of the Germans, Konstantin Konstantinovich was wrong. Such battalions were created in the Red Army for officers who

were taken prisoner unwounded and now called upon to fight as privates in order to atone for their "guilt" with blood. But no traces of the existence of assault officer battalions in the Wehrmacht have yet been found.

W. Haupt described the fall of Bobruisk as follows:

"The city was in chaos that day. Infantrymen, artillerymen, nurses, sappers, convoys, signalmen, generals and thousands of wounded spontaneously retreated to the city, which was already brutally bombed. Soviet

attack aircraft. Major General Adolf Hamann, appointed commandant of the "fortress", hardly could

bring order to these defeated troops. Only energetic officers rallied leftovers

of their units and again created battle groups, which in some places and somehow on the outskirts of the city were preparing for defense. The army command tried to surrender Bobruisk, but Hitler forbade it ... When he finally gave his permission in the afternoon of June 28, it was already too late.

A variety of combat groups that had gathered last night, on the morning of June 29, tried in some places to break through from the surrounded Bobruisk in the northern and western directions.

On that day, about 30 thousand soldiers of the 9th Army were in the Bobruisk area, of which about 14 thousand were able to reach the main forces of the German troops in the following days, weeks and even months. 74 thousand officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of this army died or fell into

captivity..."

The headquarters of Army Group Center, commanded by Field Marshal Ernst Busch, who flew by plane to report to the Fuhrer's Headquarters, was transferred to Lida on June 28. At 20.30 the same

Walter Model

arrived here by mail plane. When he entered the working room of the headquarters, he briefly said: "I am your new commander!" To a timid question

from the Chief of Staff of the Army Group, Lieutenant General Hans Krebs, who was already Chief of Staff of the Model, when

That

commanded the 9th Army: "What did you bring with you?" - The model replied: "Yourself!" However, the new commander, who became Field Marshal General

on March 1, 1944, actually brought with him several formations, which he, being the commander of the Northern Ukraine Army Group (now he commanded

two army groups at once), ordered to be transferred to the central sector of the Eastern Front .

On the same day, the High Command of the Ground Forces (OKH) informed the command of the army group that from June 30 some formations would be

transferred to the central sector of the Eastern Front. Among them is the Franconian-Thuringian 4th Panzer Division of Major General Clemens

Betzel and the Silesian 28th Jaeger Division of Lieutenant General Gustav Heisterman von Zilberg. Both will immediately be delivered to the Baranovichi region. The

North German 170th Infantry Division, Major General Siegfried Hass, will arrive from Lake Peipsi from the Army Group North zone to Minsk. In addition, the

main command of the ground forces sent seven combat marching battalions and three anti-tank battalions to Minsk - the reserve of the high command.

Thanks to this, on June 30, for the first time, a "calming down" of the situation followed, about which the combat journal of the Army Group Center

reported: "For the first time after nine days of constantly lasting battle in Belarus, this day brought temporary relaxation." However, the discharge was short-lived. The main forces of Army Group Center remained surrounded

east of Minsk, and Model could not help THEM. ON JULY 2, HE ordered to leave Minsk immediately.

For merits in the liberation of Belarus, Rokossovsky was awarded on June 29, 1944 rank

Marshal of the Soviet Union. This was not only a recognition of the outstanding military merits of Konstantin Konstantinovich. There were also certain political considerations. It was assumed that the Rokossovsky front would liberate Poland and the Polish capital Warsaw. The highest military rank in the Polish army was marshal, and it would be inconvenient if the commander of the front liberating Warsaw did not have this rank. In addition, it

would be very symbolic if this marshal were a Pole. But Rokossovsky, unfortunately, did not have a chance

liberate Warsaw.

Konstantin Konstantinovich recalled:

“After the encirclement and defeat of enemy units near Bobruisk by the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, and the Vitebsk-Orsha and Mogilev groupings of the enemy by adjacent fronts, favorable conditions were created for new attacks on the enemy. On June 28, the Headquarters assigned the following task to the 1st Belorussian Front: part of the forces to attack Minsk, and the main forces - to

Slutsk, Baranovichi, in order to cut off the enemy's retreat to the southwest, and in cooperation with the troops of the 3rd Belorussian Front, complete the encirclement of the Minsk group of fascist troops as soon as possible.

These days, the commanders of our mobile formations have shown high military skill. On July 2, with a strong blow in the center, the 1st Guards Tank Corps of General Panov broke through the defenses of the 12th German division and, together with the infantry of the 82nd division, captured the Pukhovichi area. Cavalry-mechanized group of General Pliev rushed to Slutsk. At dawn on July 2

cavalry guards captured Stolbtsy, Gorodzey and Nesvizh, cutting the communications of the Minsk group to Baranovichi, Brest, Luninets.

Parts of the 85th Rifle Corps of the 3rd Army reached the Pogost-Cherven line, where they joined up with the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front.

The tank corps of General Bakharov, sent to bypass Minsk from the south, captured the road junction at Lyubyach on July 2 and continued to move north along the Slutsk-Minsk highway. On the same day tank

units of the 3rd Belorussian Front, having captured Smolevichi, advanced towards Minsk from the northeast. Thus, the encirclement of the 4th army of the enemy, located east of the Belarusian capital, was completed ... The liquidation of the German fascist troops trapped in the Minsk pocket was assigned to the 2nd Belorussian Front, to strengthen which they took the 3rd Army from us.

The Belarusian offensive operation was one of the few offensive operations Soviet

troops in which tank armies did not participate. Tanks were used only in composition of the tank and

mechanized corps and individual tank brigades and regiments. Such use it turned out

as if more effective than the appearance on the battlefield of poorly controlled Soviet tank

armies. However, a correct comparison still does not work, because in the battle in

In Belarus, the Germans had very few tanks and aircraft, and the numerical superiority of the Red Army this time was overwhelming.

Nevertheless, during the operation "Bagration" there were failures. On July 6, the 47th Army of Lieutenant General N.I. Gusev occupied Kovel and, together with the 11th Tank Corps of Major General of the Tank Forces F.N. Rudkin, began to pursue the enemy without organizing reconnaissance. The Germans, on the other hand, entrenched themselves on a well-equipped anti-tank line and almost completely destroyed the 11th Panzer Corps, which neither infantry nor artillery could really support in the attack. On July 16, a formidable order from the Stavka followed:

"Commander of the 1st Belorussian Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union Rokossovsky, who personally led the actions of the troops in the Kovel direction, the organization of the battle of the 11th tank

did not check the hull. As a result of this exceptionally poor organization of the entry into battle tank corps, two tank brigades thrown into the attack lost 75 tanks irretrievably. Bid

Supreme High Command warns Marshal of the Soviet Union Rokossovsky
O the need to continue to carefully and thoroughly prepare for the introduction of tank formations into battle ... "

It was one of the rare setbacks in Rokossovsky's career. However, the main fault lay not with him, but with the corps commander and the army commander. After all, the front commander cannot follow

behind

the introduction into battle of each tank and mechanized corps, of which he had as many as seven at the front. Therefore, Gusev and Rudkin were punished much more severely than Rokossovsky. Gusev was reprimanded, and Rudkin was removed from his post.

N. A. Antipenko recalled: "On July 11, 1944, a favorable situation developed for the troops of the 65th Army: they could move on the move, i.e. with minimal losses, cross the river Shara. But there was so little ammunition in the troops that even if they were successful, they would have nothing to hold the bridgehead.

Therefore, the front commander, General of the Army K.K. Rokossovsky, who was at the location of the 65th Army, before allowing the crossing of the Shara River, called the head of the rear of the front to the wire and asked if 500 tons could be delivered by the deadline

ammunition? The commander emphasized the exceptional importance of resolving this issue for the entire operation of the front. Not wanting to receive an immediate, and therefore, perhaps, a reckless answer,

Rokossovsky gave two hours for calculations and added: "If there is no such possibility, say so directly. I will delay the further advance of the troops.

According to Antipenko, the delivery of ammunition to the 65th Army in a short time was possible, and the offensive continued with rapid

pace.

Rokossovsky was one of the few Soviet generals who could stop the movement of troops due to lack of ammunition. Most preferred to go forward,

regardless of losses.

On July 5, the main forces of the German divisions surrounded to the east of Minsk were eliminated. To the west of the city, Model managed to create a defensive line. It was occupied by the 4th, 5th and 12th Panzer, 28th Jaeger, 50th and 170th Infantry Divisions, as well as the battle groups of the defeated divisions of Army Group Center. But they could not hold back the onslaught of the Soviet troops.

On July 8, units of the 1st Belorussian Front occupied Baranovichi, and on July 28 - Brest. The 3rd Belorussian Front, in turn, captured Lida on July 9, Vilnius on July 13, and Grodno on July 16. Already on July 18, Rokossovsky's troops crossed the Western Bug and entered the territory of the General Government - Poland occupied by the Germans.

Chapter Ten THE WARSAW TRAGEDY

On July 18, the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, having crossed the Western Bug, entered the territory of Poland within the borders recognized by the Soviet Union. On August 1, the pro-Soviet government, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKNO), established on July 22 in Chełm, settled in the liberated Lublin. He was formally subordinate to the 1st Army of the Polish Army, which operated as part of the 1st Belorussian Front, and the partisan detachments of the pro-communist People's Army, operating in the German-occupied territory of Poland.

At the same time, on the territory of Poland within the borders on September 1, 1939, numerous detachments of the Home Army (AK) operated, subordinate to the Polish government in exile, located in London. Soldiers and commanders of the AK considered Vilna and Lvov to be Polish

cities and hoped that when the post-war borders were established, they would remain part of Poland.

The Soviet government was invariably related to the Polish government in London and AK

hostile, although it was forced to cooperate with them in 1941-1943 under pressure from the Western allies. In April 1943, after the London Poles supported the participation of the Polish

Red Cross in the investigation of the Katyn massacre, Moscow tore

diplomatic relations

with the Polish government-in-exile. The Red Army received an order to disarm the detachments of the Home Army, and to arrest the officers. In case of resistance of the partisans, the AK was allowed to be destroyed.

On July 19, 1944, the commander of the Army, Regional General Tadeusz Komarovsky (pseudonym Bur) reported to London about the events in the Vilna region:

"In the Vilnius region. On the night of July 7, AK, with a force of about two divisions, hit Vilna independently.

Detachments of the AK district of Novogrudek in the Lida region were sent to fight for Vilna. IN 16.00 July 7

regular subdivisions of the Soviet army entered the battle for Vilna with a force of about a division. The commandant of the Vilna

district immediately established contact with the Soviet commander of the front. The rapid passage of Soviet troops through

the Vilna and Novogrudok voivodeships became

possible

thanks to the long, earlier actions of the AK, which cleared the territory and disorganized the German rear. The struggle for Vilna lasted in an acute form until July 10, when detachments of the AK from the outside invaded Vilna. The struggle for

individual points of resistance in the city lasted until July 13. In the battles for Vilna, a group of four battalions under the command

of Major Vengeln, 11/85 pp under the command of Captain Jan, stood out, which captured the most defended bunker inside the city, unsuccessfully attacked by Soviet troops - a battalion under the command of Captain Shcherbets.

The fighting detachments of the AK everywhere received the recognition of Soviet combat commanders. After the end of the battle, the AK detachments concentrated with a force of about two divisions in the Vilna area and

Puscha Rudnitskaya. On July 12, the Soviet authorities appointed a communications officer to the commandant of the Vilna district.

On July 15, the commandant of the district of Vilna, as commander of the AK detachments, was invited to the commander of

the 3rd Belorussian Front, General Chernyakhovsky, who accepted without conditions the proposal of the commandant of the district to separate the 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Brigade in the direction of the main attack. These

units, after reorganization and armament, after a short period of time, were to leave for the front, as parts of the Polish army,

subordinate to the Polish government and the Supreme High Command. On July 17, the Soviet authorities treacherously arrested the headquarters of the Vilna and Novogrudek districts.

On July 23, the Germans left Lviv under the threat of encirclement. On the same day, the center and the western part cities were occupied by up to three thousand soldiers of the 6th division of the Home Army, who entered

battle

with the German rearguards. On July 31, 1944, General Bur-Komarovsky reported to London: "Our detachments of about three

thousand people took part in the battles for Lvov. The attitude of the Soviet units during the fighting was normal.

After revealing

the secrets of the commander of the district, before the representative of the commander of the front, he said: "The Lvov region

belongs to the Soviet state. You must lay down your arms and disband your troops within two hours. The

Soviets will

mobilize. The Poles will have a choice between Berling and the Soviet troops. AK officers who are not subject

to mobilization can keep

their weapons and come

To

Berling." The district commander gave the order to disband the detachments.

The Craiova Army in Vilnius, Lvov, and later in Warsaw carried out Operation Tempest, during which it was

supposed to occupy

Polish cities when the Red Army approached them, knocking out German garrisons from there, and try to restore

the power of the

Polish government in exile. At the same time, it was allowed to enter into conflicts with the Red Army

only in self-defense - in the event of

an attack by Soviet troops on AK units. On July 31, Bur-Komarovsky, in another report to London, reported that

"he gave an order for

Lvov, so that when the Soviets

the Poles used the opportunity to join the Berling army ... Similar orders were sent to other districts to the east of the so-called.

Curzon lines.

And in a report dated July 22, the commander of the Home Army outlined a program of relations with the Red Army and Soviet

authorities, as well as with pro-Soviet Polish authorities:

"The Soviets are entering Poland, one of the goals of which is to eliminate the independence of Poland, or at least its political

subordination to the Soviets, after the eastern regions have been cut off from Poland. Without a clear idea of such a situation,

it will not be possible to mobilize all the Polish forces in the political campaign that we must wage against Russia

and win it. In this

campaign, we can count on the help of the Anglo-Saxons only if we demonstrate a resolute will to win it and skillfully

throw all means into

the scales. The methods of action of the Soviets will be varied and very flexible, they can be expressed as

a crude form of occupation and terror, as well as outwardly benevolent refraining from interfering in internal Polish affairs, while at the same time inciting a part of society and

spreading anarchy from above, in order to intervene later on behalf of a part of the Polish

people or to restore
order.

Our decision must be: 1. Not to stop fighting
the Germans even for a minute.

2. Spiritually mobilize the entire society in the country for the fight against Russia, not excluding those elements that could fall under
Soviet influence
and contribute to the decomposition of a single
Polish

front.

3. To overcome the provocative activities of the pro-fascist organization ONR (People's Radical Union. - B.S.), which,
with its irresponsible speeches

Maybe

break the unity of the Polish front, which can be presented as a diversion so desired by the Soviets.

4. Pull as many of the Polish elements as possible away from the Soviets, which are already in their

disposal and are used as the Polish card in the international game.

5. In the event of an attempt to seize Poland, start an open struggle against the Soviets.

This program, upon closer examination, looks like a utopia. Since Stalin decided to liquidate the Home Army (and there was
already a lot of
evidence for this by the end of July), then it certainly could not resist the Red Army. England and the USA recognized the
Polish government in
London, but were not going to enter into a serious conflict with Stalin because of it. And, of course, the Soviet troops and
special services would
not allow any open agitation against the pro-Soviet Polish structures on the Polish territory occupied by the Red Army.

Soviet troops were able to capture bridgeheads across the Vistula in Magnuszew (1st Belorussian Front) and Baranow (1st Ukrainian
Front). But
their progress in Poland slowed down due to the increased resistance of the enemy. German tank divisions began to launch
counterattacks
on the bridgeheads. Rokossovsky recalled: "On July 24, the 2nd Tank and 8th Guards armies liberated Lublin. On July 25, tankers
reached the
Vistula near Deblin. Here, General A. I. Radzievsky, who replaced the wounded S. I. Bogdanov, handed over his sector to the 1st
Polish Army,
which was advancing behind the tank army, and the tankers received a new task - to advance along the right bank of the Vistula on

north, on
the move to capture the suburbs of Warsaw - Prague and hold it until the approach of the 47th army. 1-
I am Polish
the army was supposed to cross the Vistula in the Deblin direction and seize a bridgehead
on her
western coast.

By July 28, the main forces of the front at the Brest-Sedlec-Otwock line, having met stubborn resistance from enemy troops, were forced to turn their front to the north. Everything felt that in this area the German command had gathered large forces with the intention of launching a counterattack in a southerly direction east of the Vistula and preventing our armies from forcing the river.

Since the enemy held his main grouping east of Warsaw, the troops left wing of the front had the opportunity to quickly advance to the Vistula. On July 27, the 69th army of General Kolpakchi came to her. Its troops crossed the river near Puławy on the move, and by the 29th they had captured a bridgehead on the western bank. The 1st Polish Army on July 31 tried to make a throw across the Vistula, but failed. However, by this time we could use the entire 8th Guards Army to fight for the western bank of the river. On the morning of August 1, she began forcing in the Magnuszew area, the mouth of the Pilica River.

During the day, the troops of General Chuikov captured a bridgehead on the western bank of the Vistula, 15 kilometers wide and up to 10 kilometers deep. By August 4, the army managed to bring across the river bridges with a carrying capacity of 16 tons and one 60-ton. Vasily Ivanovich Chuikov transported tanks and all artillery to the bridgehead. The engineering troops of the front began building a wooden bridge on piles.

Intelligence, air and radio intelligence data confirmed the hasty transfer of enemy troops to the Magnushevsky bridgehead. It was necessary to help Chuikov's guardsmen. We turn to our fighting friends to the Poles. Having transferred the line along the banks of the Vistula to the cavalry corps, Sigmund Berling leads his troops to the bridgehead in a forced march. They take up defensive positions on the right flank of the 8th Guards Army. We also have time to transport the tank corps of the 2nd tank army here.

All this was done on time. The enemy unleashed a blow of colossal force on the bridgehead. But our defenses here proved unshakable. Multi-day frenzied attacks yielded nothing.

to the Nazis, except
for huge losses.

The advance of Soviet troops across Polish territory was hampered not only by German resistance, but also by growing difficulties with transport. On July 19, 1944, Zhukov, as Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief, issued a directive to the commanders of the 1st and 2nd Belorussian Fronts to restore order with transport in the troops and in the rear. She said:

“In almost all the advancing divisions, corps and armies, on the way to the front, a lot of reinforcements, artillery, ammunition and logistics institutions lagged behind. Stretching the rear reached 400-500 km. The commanders of the armies and fronts have not yet taken the necessary measures to quickly pull up all the stragglers, citing either the lack of fuel or the lack of vehicles, while divisions, corps and armies are disorganized and mismanaged using gasoline

And

transport. See what the troops just don't drag along the roads: they pull a lot of captured, faulty cars, burning a lot of gasoline for this, they transport furniture by cars, up to soft armchairs, sofas and city beds, inclusive, transport all rubbish unnecessary for battle, spending on all this superfluous and unnecessary mass of fuel and vehicles. All this is happening at a time when there is a shortage of ammunition in the troops, artillery and mechanized reinforcements, as well as the necessary rear facilities, have lagged behind.

I demand:

1. Immediately clear the transport of all junk and trash that the troops do not need for battle and field

life, handing it over to the local authorities.

2. Dramatically reduce the transport seconded for the transfer of headquarters, canteens, personal apartments and household items. Transfer the freed vehicles to autobattalions for the transport of ammunition and fuel.

3. It is strictly forbidden to tow faulty trophy vehicles, handing them over to assembly repair points.

4. To take decisive measures to immediately bring up all lagging behind artillery, reinforcements, and rear establishments necessary for combat.

5. To control the execution of the present, allocate the required number of energetic people. 6. Execution to be reported on 20.7.44.

Rokossovsky's resolution was preserved on this directive:

"Chief of Staff.

Give a directive to the troops, obliging the most stringent manner, under the personal responsibility of the Military

councils of the armies, to fully implement in the shortest possible time the instructions of the Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief. To the head of logistics:

allocate appropriate people to control
accurate
execution.

Rokossovsky 19.7.1944.

The Zhukovsky directive already contained a hint of the "trophy fever" that had gripped the troops, primarily in the person of senior officers and generals. It concerned so far expensive cars and furniture. IN

it manifested itself in full measure with the beginning of 1945, when the Soviet troops entered the
territory of Germany.

On July 21, the German defense on the Bug was broken. On July 22, Rokossovsky's troops liberated Chelm, and on July 23 - Lublin.

In Warsaw, panic broke

out among the German rear institutions.

Many

German officials evacuated to the west. The panic was exacerbated by the failed assassination attempt on Hitler. The Soviet command believed that it would

be relatively easy to capture Warsaw, since the Germans did not seem to be going to defend the Polish capital with particular stubbornness.

On July 27, 1944, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command issued a directive to the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian

Front on the offensive in the Warsaw direction and the capture of bridgeheads on the western bank of the Narew River:

"The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command ORDERS:

1. After the right wing of the front has captured the area of Brest and Sedlec, develop an offensive in the general direction of Warsaw with the task of capturing

Prague no later than August 5-8 and capturing a bridgehead on the western bank of the river. Narew near Pultusk, Serock. Capture the left wing of the front

bridgehead on
the western bank of the river. Vistula in the area of Deblin, Zvolen, Solec. Captured bridgeheads
use
to strike in a northwestern direction in order to roll up the enemy's defenses along the river. Narev and r. Vistula
and thereby
facilitate the crossing of the river. Narew to the left wing of the 2nd Belorussian Front and the river. Vistula -
to the central
armies of their front. In the future, keep in mind to advance in the general direction of Thorn and Lodz.

On July 28, the advanced units of Rokossovsky occupied two bridgeheads on the western bank of the
Vistula. On July
29, the Kosciuszko radio station from Lublin broadcast an appeal calling for an uprising in Warsaw. On the same
day, a
German communiqué reported that the Russians had launched a general attack on Warsaw from the
southwest. And at
the same time, a directive from the Stavka appeared, entrusting G.K. Zhukov with "not only coordinating, but
also directing
the operations carried out by the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, the 1st Belorussian Front and the 2nd
Belorussian
Front."

July 30, Sunday, there was a big tank battle near Warsaw. The Soviet 3rd Panzer Corps occupied
Volomin and Radzymin, threatening the junction of the German 9th and 2nd armies. Two Soviet
tanks broke into the Targuvek area, but were hit and their crews took refuge with the locals. The 16th
Panzer
Corps of the 2nd Panzer Army occupied the Warsaw suburb of Wyanzovnya and went out

on the Lublin highway. The 8th Guards Tank Corps cut the highway near the railway leading to Warsaw. Before
the Warsaw

suburbs of Anino and Wavra, Soviet tanks had
five

kilometers. But then the Germans launched a counterattack with the 73rd Infantry Division and the
Hermann Goering
Panzer Division. The commander of the 9th Army, General of Panzer Troops Nikolaus von Forman, threw into
battle the

4th SS Panzer Corps, which managed to recapture Sedlec. On July 31, Field Marshal Model forbade any

withdrawal in the Warsaw direction.

The command of the 2nd Panzer Army requested reinforcements from Rokossovsky, believing that the
Germans had
no more reserves, and the road to Warsaw was practically open. Rokossovsky did not give
reinforcements and
preferred to withdraw the battered tank army from the battlefield. The 47th Army, advancing from Sedlec, was
redirected to
Prague.

Until August 6, the tankers of the 2nd Panzer Army repelled the German counterattack. They managed to take
Okunev and Minsk-
Mazowiecki, but the offensive finally fizzled out. By July 31, the Soviet 2nd

the tank army, numbering 810 tanks and self-propelled guns by the beginning of the Lublin-Warsaw operation, irretrievably lost 130 vehicles, 582 people were killed and 1581 were wounded. On July 23, its commander, Lieutenant General S. I. Bogdanov, was seriously wounded in Lublin. He was driving an armored personnel carrier behind his tanks along the northern outskirts of the city, and a German sniper's bullet crushed his humerus. General A. I. Radzievsky, Chief of Staff of the Army, took command.

Strictly speaking, the losses were heavy, but not catastrophic, and the army was still combat-ready. In total, before the end of the battle for Warsaw, the 2nd Panzer Army irretrievably lost 989 tanks and self-propelled guns, completely exhausting its forces.

On July 31, the troops of the right flank of the 1st Belorussian Front started fighting on the near approaches to Prague, and the troops of the left flank crossed the Vistula south of Warsaw and captured bridgeheads

districts of the cities of Magnusheva and Pulawy. Meanwhile, even more important events, directly related to the fate of Poland, were taking place on the political front. On the same day, Molotov received Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile and the leader of the Peasants' Party. They talked for half an hour. Judging by the transcript of the conversation, Mikołajczyk said, What

"The Polish government is now carrying out the accumulation of forces to assist the Soviet troops at a decisive moment in their struggle against the Germans. The plan of action for the Poles was drawn up by the Polish government together with General Tabor, who had recently arrived from Poland, and proposed to the British government with a request to hand it over to the Soviet government. Back in October last year, all the armed forces of Poland received an order that they fight together with the Soviet armed forces. The Polish prime minister tried in vain to convince Molotov that there were no parties in the Polish government hostile to the Soviet Union. He sought to discuss Poland's problems with the Soviet

government, but Molotov insisted that the London Poles should discuss these issues with the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

Mikołajczyk informed Molotov that "the Polish government was considering a plan for a general uprising in Warsaw and would like to ask the Soviet government to bombard airfields near Warsaw."

To this, Molotov self-confidently remarked that the Red Army "was only left to Warsaw only about ten kilometers."

At these negotiations, Mikolajczyk made it clear to Molotov that he considered the PKNO a Soviet puppet and preferred to discuss fundamental questions about the political future of Poland.

with its owner - the Soviet government. Molotov insisted that the questions
Related

Poland, Mikołajczyk should discuss with the PKNO, that is, in fact, recognize this pro-Soviet structure and submit to it. The Soviet People's Commissar expressed

no interest
in rebellion

in Warsaw, led by AK. Mikołajczyk did not tell him that General Bur-Komarovsky had already on July 25 brought all the forces of his army in Warsaw into

a state of readiness for an uprising. Molotov clearly hoped that the Red Army would be able to occupy Warsaw without the help of the rebels and in general before

the uprising began.

On July 31, Rokossovsky reported to the General Staff about the difficulties in supplying fuel: "The constant detachment of troops from supply bases due to the lag in the restoration of railways creates difficulties in supplying fuel. In order to mitigate this and to be able to supply fuel through the Vistula, I ask for orders to urgently form a battalion for pumping fuel, giving this battalion an imported gasoline pipeline with pumping facilities and equipment at the disposal of the USG KA. The battalion must be sent urgently by rail to Lublin."

Indeed, the bottleneck remained the supply of fuel. The head of the logistics of the 1st Belorussian Front N.A. Antipenko recalled: "During the Belorussian operation, the supply of fuel was sometimes so poor that it had to be given to the armies in microdoses - 30-40 tons each, with a need of 300-400 tons. Not the number of vehicles, but the amount of fuel was the reason for the interruptions in the supply of ammunition and other combat equipment to the

troops ... Our front used up more than 100 thousand tons of fuel, or about 170 trains. He could have spent much more in terms of his equipment, and the offensive operation would only have benefited from this.

The lack of fuel fettered the actions of Soviet tank formations and aviation, preventing

the Red Army to make full use of its overwhelming advantage in men and technique.

This advantage has decreased somewhat since the battles in Belarus due to large

Soviet losses, but still remained significant.

On the night of August 1, while crossing the Vistula, the 1st Army of the Polish Army failed. On

about four battalions managed to cross the right bank, but they could not hold the bridgehead

could. The reasons for the failure were both in the lack of crossing facilities, and in the lack of fire and inexperience of the newly mobilized young Polish soldiers.

Rokossovsky's sister Helena remained in Warsaw, who did not know that her brother was in command of the Soviet troops approaching the city. She recalled: "Already just before the Warsaw Uprising, someone showed me a leaflet that said that Rokossovsky was leading his troops to the West. I did not realize how much our surname is hated by the Germans. I was convinced of this during the uprising. In the courtyard of the house on the street. Senatorskaya, 31, where we worked, the Germans broke in. At that moment, one of my neighbors called me by my last name. This was heard by a German officer. He ran up to me and, shouting - along with curses - "Rokossovskaya", "Rokossovskaya", - hit me on the head with the butt of a pistol. I fell. I was saved from imminent death by a nurse who happened to be nearby, who pulled out an "Aussweiss" with a fictitious surname from my purse and, using her knowledge of the German language, showed it to the fascist and explained that he just heard it. The reaction of this Hitlerite to the surname "Rokossovsky" surprised me greatly. It didn't fit in my head that our Kostya, whom I remembered as a young thin soldier, beloved brother, family favorite, benevolent and so dear, could become such

famous and formidable person."

On August 1, at 17:00, the Warsaw Uprising began. Rumors spread in Moscow that day that Rokossovsky's troops would take Warsaw on August 9 or 10. The Polish capital was indeed the main target of the offensive of the 1st Byelorussian Front, because it lay on the shortest route to the center of Germany. Colonel-General Heinz Guderian, who was appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces after the suppression of the plot on July 20, believed that Soviet troops would try to occupy Warsaw as early as the first week of August. The German garrison of the city was only 15 thousand people, including officials. The morale of the Germans was painfully affected by the catastrophe of Army Group Center in Belarus. There were about 40,000 fighters of the Home Army and about 2,000 fighters of the pro-Soviet People's Army in the city. The ratio of their numbers roughly reflected the degree of influence of communist and non-communist forces in Poland.

On August 1, the commander of the 2nd Tank Army of the Guard, Major General A. I. Radzievsky ordered

move to the defense at the turn Kobylka - Ossow - Sulejowek - Milosna Star - Zbytky:

"1. Enemy units of the 73rd Infantry Division, TD "Hermann Goering", TD SS "Dead Head", 5th MD SS "Viking" (in fact, the "Viking" has long been a tank, not a motorized division. - B.S.), 19th TD, 6th Warsaw Security Regiment, relying on the Warsaw fortified area, offered stubborn resistance to the 2nd TA at the turn: Yablonka, Legionowo, Charna Struga, Marki, Okunev, Tsekhuvka, Zbytki.

2. 2nd TA goes on the defensive. The front line of defense at the turn: Kobylka, Ossow, Sulejowek, Milosna Star, Zbytky; have cover from the east and partly from the northeast against the retreating units of the enemy's Brest grouping. Defense readiness 12.00 1.8.44.

This order did not yet have any political motives, since the uprising in Warsaw was not yet known on the Soviet side.

Only on the night of August 2 did the British military mission in Moscow inform the Soviet General Staff about the uprising and that the rebels were asking the Russians for an "immediate attack from outside", and also asking the Western Allies for supplies of weapons and ammunition from Italy.

On August 3, the representative of the General Staff at the headquarters of the 8th Guards Army, Lieutenant Colonel Drabkin, reported to Zhukov about the reasons for the failure in the battles to expand the bridgehead:

Troops of the 8th Guards. During August 2, 1944, the armies fought an unsuccessful battle on the western bank of the Vistula and continued to transport infantry, artillery, ammunition and cavalry.

The reason for the unsuccessful offensive battle for the expansion of the bridgehead on the western bank of the river. Vistula
I think:

a) Indecisive infantry actions without an appropriate amount of reinforcements, namely:

lack of tanks and insufficient artillery on the western bank of the river. Vistula, and especially in the morning.

6) The resistance of the pr-ka increased, since the latter planned, according to the testimony of the prisoners, to throw our units from the occupied bridgehead, using his aviation for this. During 2.8.1944

Enemy aircraft disabled a large number of crossing facilities, which slowed down the crossing of troops and equipment during August 2, 1944.

The absence of a built pontoon bridge and an insufficient number of floating crossing facilities does not make it possible to transfer divisional mechanically traction artillery, tanks and other equipment to the western coast in a timely manner. <...>

An attempt to transport tanks to the west. the bank of the Vistula under water did not give any result, the first 2 KV tanks remained under water and at this the crossing of the tanks was stopped. For the crossing of heavy equipment (tanks, wheel-drawn artillery), it is necessary to speed up the construction of a heavy pontoon bridge."

On August 3, 1944, the commander of the 2nd Panzer Army reported to the commander of the 1st Belorussian Front about the enemy's counterattack in the Radzymin area:

"The enemy from the Radzymin district, with a force of up to 85 tanks with infantry, attacked the 8th Guards at 10.00. mk in the direction of Voloshin and from the direction of Zelenka to Ossow, with a force of up to 40 tanks, he pushed our parts and by 18.00 03.8.44 is fighting at the turn: the railway line in the Voloshin region.

8th Guards shopping mall, repelling the attacks of tanks from the east and west, is fighting at the same line.

I decided: with the release of the infantry to the Okunev area, the 8th Guards. shopping mall in the general direction of Ossow, Zelenka, Marki, cut the Varshavskoe highway in the Struga region, Marki.

8th Guards. maybe go on a counterattack on Radzymin.

I ask the 16th TC to urgently change the infantry and allow me to withdraw to the Okunev area in order to gather the army into a fist, now scattered and inconvenient to manage.

Rokossovsky's resolution was preserved on this report: "To the commander of the 2nd tank. If the 3rd TC is in danger of being pushed back from the main forces of the army, then withdraw it to the main forces, having the main task of preventing the enemy from moving south and southeast.

Rokossovsky, it seems, had already begun to have doubts about the ability of the 2nd Panzer Army to break through to Warsaw. He does not authorize the counterattack proposed by Radzievsky on Radzymin and,

on the contrary, he advises to pull the 3rd tank corps to the main forces of the army.

On the same day, August 3, Stalin received Polish Prime Minister Mikolajczyk. The conversation lasted two and a half hours. Here are excerpts from it:

"Mikolajczyk declares that if it were not for the Soviet Union, then Polysa would have been under the yoke of Germany for a long time. <...>

Tov. Stalin declares that, to avoid misunderstanding, he must state that the Soviet Government has no intention of

determining how many parties will participate in the Polish government. This is not the business of the Soviet Government.

Of course, the Soviet Government would like democratic parties to be represented in the Polish government. But this issue should

be decided by the Poles themselves. The Soviet Government will not interfere in this matter. If it is interesting to know the

opinion of the Soviet Government, then he, comrade. Stalin might say that it would be happy if all the democratic parties in

Poland formed a bloc. The Soviet Government would support this bloc.

Mikolajczyk says that four parties are represented in the Polish government. All these parties are democratic. In 1939, during

the stay of the leaders of these parties in France, the Sejm was dissolved and it was decided that the President of the

Republic had to sign a statement waiving his rights. He, Mikołajczyk, would like these four parties to participate in the government

to be established in Warsaw.

Tov. Stalin says that we need to agree on what will be discussed. If Mikolajczyk wishes

to talk about the force that was born in Poland in the form of the Polish Committee for National Liberation, then we need to

discuss the relationship between the Polish government in London and the PCWP.

Mikolajczyk declares that he is ready to discuss all issues.

Tov. Stalin states that Churchill wrote to him that Mikolajczyk wanted to come to Moscow and asked if he agreed,

comrade. Stalin, accept Mikolajczyk. At the same time, Churchill stated that he believed that the main purpose of Mikolajczyk's trip

was to unite the Poles, and expressed the hope that

that he, comrade. Stalin will help the Poles in this matter. He, comrade Stalin agreed to do it. In his opinion, we can talk about the relationship between the two forces related to Poland. This question is hard to get around.

Mikołajczyk replies that he doesn't want to sidestep the issue. He wants to be in Warsaw. Tov. Stalin replies that the Germans have Warsaw.

Mikołajczyk says that he thinks Warsaw will soon be liberated and he can set up a new government there based on all the forces of Poland.

Tov. Stalin remarks: "God grant that it be so."

He, comrade Stalin must warn that the Soviet Government does not recognize the London Polish government, that it has broken off relations with it. At the same time, the Soviet Government has actual relations and an agreement with the PKNO. These facts must be taken into account.

Mikołajczyk asks if he should understand this in the sense that all routes to Poland are closed to the Polish government in London.

Tov. Stalin replies that this must be understood in the sense that, before negotiating with Mikołajczyk as head of the Polish government, it would be good to put an end to the existence of two governments - one in London and the other in Chełm. He, comrade Stalin agrees that it would be good to join forces and create a provisional government. You should have done this yourself

Poles.

Mikołajczyk declares that he is not so far from Marshal Stalin in his point of view, but he brings

a proposal for cooperation between the four parties with their friends from the PKNO, since the PKNW represents only a part of the Polish people. Marshal

Stalin is well aware that Witoye cannot represent the Polish Peasant Party, since back in 1929 he ceased to be its member.

Tov. Stalin says that the Mikołajczyk criterion for determining popularity political

agent is wrong. Poland has been under the heel of the German invaders for five years. During the war and the occupation, new people grew up in Poland. Links to old authorities are irrelevant.

Poland has moved to the left in four years. We must reckon with the new authorities. He, comrade Stalin, could cite the Red Army as an example, where new people grew up, where old

authorities

have receded into the background. If, prior to the start of the Soviet-German war, someone had approached us with a statement that in three years Russia would have such generals as Rokossovsky, Chernyakhovsky, Konev, Eremenko, Bagramyan, we would not have believed it and laughed. The old authorities have departed, new ones have appeared. War and occupation is a big engine. Can't refer to old

authorities. We need to look for new people. Osubka Moravsky belongs to such new people.

A

Tov. Stalin declares that the Soviet Union is a country at war with Germany on the territory of Poland. The Red Army is interested in the existence of a quiet rear. If there are two Polish governments and two systems, then this can bring great harm to the struggle of the Red Army against the Germans. If the Polish government in London has the intention and considers it expedient to come to an agreement with the PCWN and set up one Polish government, then the Soviet Government is ready to help this. If the Polish Government considers this undesirable, then the Soviet Government will be forced to cooperate with the PKNO. This is the position of the Soviet

Government, which he, comrade. Stalin, asks to take into account.

Mikołajczyk replies that the Polish government is ready to come to an agreement with the PCWN and with those who fought in Poland during the five years of occupation.

Mikołajczyk asks how comrade. Stalin imagines the borders of Poland.

Tov. Stalin replies that the Soviet Government considers that the eastern border of Poland should go along the Curzon line, the western border along the Oder River, leaving the city of Stettin to the Poles, and the Königsberg region with the city of Königsberg to the Russians.

Mikołajczyk says that, consequently, Lvov and Vilna remain part of the Soviet Union.

Tov. Stalin declares that, according to Lenin's ideology, all peoples are equal. He, comrade Stalin does not want to offend Lithuanians, Ukrainians or Poles.

Mikołajczyk declares that the loss of Lvov and Vilna will be an insult to the Polish people. The Polish people will not understand this, because they believe that Poland should not suffer damage,

if only because there
was not a single quisling in Poland.

Tov. Stalin notes that this will not be a detriment to Poland. Speaking of damage
then he

will be able to report that a large group of Russian nationalists accuse the Soviet Government of having ruined Russia because
Russia does not include

Poland, which used to be part of it. If you listen to all kinds of accusations, you can get completely confused. The Curzon line was not
invented

by the Poles and not by the Russians. It appeared as a result of an arbitral award made by the allies in Paris. The Russians did not participate
in the development

of the Curzon Line. He, comrade Stalin, at the same time, must say that there are few Russians who will agree that Bialystok
should go to Poland,
as is done along the Curzon line.

Mikolajczyk declares that he is sure that if Com. Stalin will make a generous gesture,
then he

will receive the gratitude of the Polish people and find an ally in them.

Tov. Stalin declares that Lvov is surrounded by Ukrainian villages. Soviet Government
can not

offend Ukrainians. It must be taken into account that there are many Ukrainians in the Red Army and that they are all good

fighting the Germans. The Ukrainians will not tolerate the Soviet Government handing over Lvov...

<...> Tov. Stalin declares that the Poles will receive Breslau instead of Lvov. They will have enough ore and coal in Silesia."

It is striking that Stalin spoke to Mikołajczyk and other members of the Polish delegation much softer than Molotov. This is how it was
with Vyacheslav

Mikhailovich: when meeting with foreign delegations, Molotov plays the role of an "evil investigator", and Stalin, in contrast, plays the role
of a

"good one". The main issue in this conversation was the question of the relationship between the PCNW and the London government.

Mikołajczyk

expressed his readiness to include the communists in the future unified Polish government, but wanted to head it himself. He also insisted
that in the future Polish government all parties forming the Polish

government in exile in London.

Stalin offered a completely different scenario for the political future of Poland. He wanted Mikolajczyk, along with some members of the
London

government, to become part of the PCNW, which would still be dominated by communists and other pro-Soviet forces. Iosif Vissarionovich
was

especially worried that the London government and the Home Army

will

try to create their own administrative structures and keep armed detachments beyond the control of the Soviet side. But precisely in order to prevent the

creation of a Polish army not controlled by the USSR, Polish officers were shot in 1940

V

Katyn. And the fact that Mikolajczyk was going to send his

representative to establish the functioning of the government in the Polish capital, not could not

provoke Stalin's wrath. Just to arrest such a government, recognized by England and the United States, and without noise to disarm tens of thousands of

fighters of the Home Army would not have been possible. At that moment, the attention of the American and British public was riveted to Warsaw. Roosevelt

and Churchill would have had to listen to their public opinion. The alternative could then stand like this: either a serious conflict with the Western allies, or

recognition of at least dual power in Poland, with governments in Lublin and Warsaw.

Practically on this day, August 3, the fate of the Warsaw Uprising was decided. It was solved with a rather ominous Stalinist phrase: "God grant that it be so" in response

to Mikolajczyk's suggestion that Warsaw would soon be liberated. At this moment, Joseph Vissarionovich firmly decided: the Red Army would not help the

Warsaw insurgents. He, it seems, sincerely underestimated the combat capabilities of the Home Army, believing the reports of Soviet partisans

And

scouts that the "Akovtsy" do not represent a serious force. And Stalin believed that the Germans would quickly be able to suppress the uprising, after which the

Red Army would be able to calmly resume the offensive and quickly occupy Warsaw, and there Berlin was not far away. Therefore, on August 5, he wrote

Churchill: "I think that the information provided by the Poles to you is greatly exaggerated and does not inspire confidence. This conclusion can be reached,

if only on the basis that the Poles, emigrants, have already attributed to themselves almost the capture of Vilna by some units of the Regional Army and

even announced this on the radio. But this, of course, is not true in any way. The Regional Army of the Poles consists of several detachments, which are incorrectly

called divisions. At

they are neither

artillery, no aircraft, no tanks. I can't imagine how such detachments can take Warsaw, for the defense of which the Germans put up four tank divisions, including the Hermann Goering division.

It seems that Stalin sincerely believed that during the war years Poland had turned to the left and now PKNO

really represents
the majority of the Polish people. Although he never fully trusted the Polish left, just as he did not trust anyone.

In fact, after the outbreak of World War II, the influence of the left in Poland, represented by the communists and groups close to them, rather fell. They are in Polish public opinion

were firmly associated with the Soviet Union, and Soviet prestige after the occupation of the eastern Polish provinces by the Red Army and the execution in Katyn (few people in Poland doubted that this was the work of Soviet hands) fell significantly. And the uprising in Warsaw itself demonstrated that Polish society rather supported the London government in exile and the Home Army, to which the communist detachments were forced to submit. And the "Akovites" still had more weapons than Stalin thought, otherwise they would not have held out in Warsaw for two whole months. Stalin did not count on such a long resistance of the rebels, and it very soon presented him with a number of new political and strategic problems.

When Stalin told Mikolajczyk about his desire to reckon with the interests and feelings of the peoples (say, Ukrainians and Lithuanians would be offended if Lvov and Vilna remained Polish), it was pure demagoguery. Stalin never allowed any popular will. Parts of the Red Army and the NKVD were already engaged in intense battles with the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the population

Western Ukraine was seen as hostile to the Soviet system and needed to be "pacified". The Soviet troops had to fight for the same long time with the Lithuanian partisans - supporters of independence. And when Stalin promised the Poles Silesian coal and petrochemistry, he forgot to clarify that both would have to be supplied exclusively to the USSR, and

very
cheap price.

It is curious that Stalin, speaking to Mikolajczyk about the new forces and politicians who allegedly appeared during the years of the war in Poland, compared them with a galaxy of young generals and marshals who appeared during the war years in the Red Army. Let's see who's on this list
what

order: Rokossovsky, Chernyakhovsky, Konev, Eremenko, Bagramyan. Quite indicative is the absence of Zhukov in this list. Obviously, Stalin did not consider Georgy Konstantinovich a young commander who advanced to the Great Patriotic War, although Zhukov was actually two years younger than Rokossovsky (Stalin, however, believed that they were of the same age). Zhukov's

True, Khalkhin Gol

was already behind him. It is possible that Iosif Vissarionovich was already alarmed by Zhukov's exorbitant ambitions and vanity and thought how he would be

after the end of the war

slightly

shorten. Although he still appointed him commander of the main front aimed at Berlin, and entrusted him with hosting the Victory Parade. But of the new

commanders, Rokossovsky enjoyed the greatest sympathy and respect for Stalin, which is why the leader put him in first place in

list.

The continuation of the Soviet offensive at that moment would undoubtedly have led to the collapse of the German defense on the Vistula.

German

General Kurt Tippelskirch admitted: "At first, success

Polish

the rebels were overwhelming: most of the German military and civilian institutions located in this large city were cut off from the outside world; the

stations are occupied by rebels who have mortars, 20-millimeter anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons (mostly captured from the Germans. - B.S.);

city highways are blocked. Only the bridges over the Vistula were held. If the Russians continued to attack the bridgehead, the position of

the German troops in the city would become hopeless. But political considerations again turned out to be more important for Stalin than

military ones.

On August 8, in a letter to Churchill, Stalin summarized his impressions of the meeting with Mikolajczyk:

"I would like to inform you about the meeting with Mikolajczyk, Grabsky and Romer. My conversation with Mikołajczyk convinced me that he had unsatisfactory

information about affairs in Poland. At the same time, I got the impression that Mikolajczyk was not opposed to finding ways

To

unification of the Poles. Not considering it possible to impose any solution on the Poles, I suggested to Mikołajczyk that he and his colleagues meet and

discuss their questions together with representatives of the Polish Committee of National Liberation, and above all the question of

the speedy unification of

all the democratic forces of Poland on the liberated Polish territory. These meetings took place. I am informed about them by both sides. The

delegation of

the National Committee proposed that the Constitution of 1921 be adopted as the basis for the activities of the Polish Government and, if agreed, gave

the Mikolajczyk group four portfolios, including the post of prime minister for Mikolajczyk. Mikolajczyk, however, did not dare to agree to this.

Unfortunately, these meetings have not yet led to the desired results. But they are still

had

positive value, since they allowed both Mikolajczyk and Moravsky and Bierut, only

that those who have arrived from Warsaw should inform each other widely about their views and especially about the fact that both the Polish National Committee and Mikołajczyk express their desire to work together and look for practical opportunities in this direction. It can be considered the first stage during relations between the Polish Committee and Mikołajczyk and his colleagues. Let's hope things go better."

It is unlikely that Stalin seriously expected that the London Poles could be forced to enter into an alliance with the Soviet henchmen, but Churchill had to be convinced that there were serious chances for such an association. As a result, everything was limited to the fact that Mikołajczyk himself joined the PKNO at the end of 1944, having received the posts of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, but without any real powers. In 1947, he had to flee abroad because of the threat of arrest.

On August 5, 1944, the headquarters of the 2nd Panzer Army reported to Rokossovsky's headquarters about the German counteroffensive:

"1. The enemy, with the forces of TD SS "Dead Head", TD "Hermann Goering", TD SS "Viking", 19-TD, 73rd Infantry Division, assault battalion, 24th construction battalion, artillery units at 11.00 3.8.44 went on the offensive on parts of the 3rd shopping mall and the 8th guards. from directions: Radzymin - 40 tanks, Klembuw - 40 tanks and armored personnel carriers, Struga - 20 tanks with infantry, Turov - 18 tanks with infantry, forest 2.5 km southwest of Okunev - 16 tanks with an infantry battalion, Posvintje - 14 tanks with infantry, Krashe-Star - 20 tanks and an armored train operating from the Zelenka area.

2. 2nd Panzer Army 3.8.44, 3rd Tank Corps and part of the forces of the 8th Guards. shopping mall fought to destroy enemy tanks and infantry. The 50th and 51st Tank Brigade of the 3rd Tank Corps fought with superior enemy forces at the turn: Duchki, the railway going through Volomin, Nadazhan, suffered heavy losses and did not leave the combat area, with the exception of individual tanks and 46 people MBA 50th brig.

Army losses: 58 tanks and self-propelled guns burned down and knocked out, 42 of them

stayed on

territory occupied by the enemy. Crushed guns of different calibers - 16, vehicles — 17.

Wounded and remained on the territory occupied by the enemy, the commanders of the 50th and 51st tank brigades - Hero of the Soviet Union Colonel Mirvoda, Major Fundovny with their headquarters.

The personnel of the 50th and 51st tank brigades acted heroically, so one tank crew set fire to 7 German tanks of different brands.

3. Damage inflicted on the enemy: tanks of various brands were destroyed - 109, vehicles - 120, mortars - 19, machine guns - 32, ammunition depots - 2, armored personnel carriers - 36, guns - 18, armored personnel carriers - 25 were knocked out.

The damage inflicted on the enemy by the 2nd Panzer Army was clarified in the report of the headquarters of the 1st Belorussian Front to the Chief of the General Staff dated August 7th. It indicated that on August 3, the Germans, having broken through the front of the 3rd Panzer Corps, occupied the city of Voloshin. The 50th and 51st tank brigades were cut off from the main forces. In an unequal battle with superior enemy forces, units of the 3rd Tank Corps destroyed over 3 thousand soldiers and officers, 109 tanks, 120 vehicles, 19 mortars, 32 machine guns, 36 armored personnel carriers, 18 guns. The losses of the 2nd Panzer Army amounted, according to the combat report of August 2, 1944, for the period of hostilities from July 20 to 31, - 582 killed, 1581 wounded, 52 missing, and for the period from July 20 to August 8 - 991 killed, 2852 wounded and 442 missing. For the period from July 20 to August 8, the irretrievable losses of armored vehicles of the 2nd Panzer Army amounted to 244 tanks and self-propelled guns, in

including 155

T-34 tanks, 48 M4-A2 tanks, 4 IS-2 tanks, 3 MK-9 tanks, 18 SU-85, 15 SU-76 and 1 SU 57. In addition, 36 guns and 11 mortars were irretrievably lost. The total losses of the army in armored vehicles reached 418 tanks and self-propelled guns.

The newly appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, Heinz Guderian, described the battles near Warsaw as follows:

"July 25, 1944. attempt by the Russian 16th Panzer Corps to cross the Vistula

By

railway bridge at Deblin collapsed. Enemy losses amounted to 30 tanks. The bridge was blown up in time. Other parts of the Russian armored forces were detained north of Warsaw.

We Germans at that time had the impression that our defense forced the enemy to stop the offensive. On August 2, the 1st Polish Army of the "Polish Free Democratic Armed Forces" launched an offensive across the Vistula in the Puławy-Demblin sector with three divisions. Despite heavy losses, she still managed to capture one bridgehead.

fortification and hold

it until the approach of Soviet reinforcements. Under Magnuszew on the Vistula to the enemy

Also

managed to create a bridgehead. The troops that crossed the Vistula in this sector had the task of advancing along the coast to Warsaw, but were stopped on the river. Pilica.

Nevertheless, on August 8, the command of the 9th German Army had the impression that the attempt

Russians to capture Warsaw with a sudden blow from the move crashed against the stamina of the German defense, despite the uprising of the Poles, which,

from the point of view of the enemy, began prematurely. The army headquarters reported that during the period from July 26 to August 8, 1944, 603 prisoners of

war were captured, there are 41 defectors, during this period, army units knocked out 337 tanks and took the following trophies: 70 guns, 80 anti-tank guns, 27

mortars and 116 machine guns. These were impressive numbers after a month of continuous retreat fighting.

Note that Guderian's estimate of the losses of Soviet tanks - 337 vehicles - is quite consistent with the data on the losses of the 2nd Panzer Army, which

lost 418 tanks and self-propelled guns from July 20 to August 8. But the data of the 2nd tank army on the missing - 442 people in the period from July 20 to August 8

- were clearly underestimated, since, according to Guderian, in the period from July 26 to August 8, 664 people from the 2nd Panzer Army were in

German captivity. The massive use of Soviet tanks, as it usually happened, led not to success, but to failure.

Rokossovsky recalled:

"On August 2, our intelligence agencies received information that allegedly a

uprising against the Nazi occupiers. This news greatly disturbed us. The front headquarters immediately began collecting information and clarifying the

scale of the uprising and its nature. Everything happened so unexpectedly that we were lost in conjectures and at first we thought: are the Germans spreading

these rumors, and if so, then for what purpose? After all, frankly speaking, the most unfortunate time to start an uprising was exactly the one in which it

began. As if the leaders of the uprising deliberately chose the time to be defeated ... These are the thoughts

unwittingly climbed into

head. At this time, the 48th and 65th armies were fighting more than a hundred kilometers east of

And

northeast of Warsaw (our right wing was weakened by going into the reserve of the Stavka

two armies, and it was still necessary, having defeated a strong enemy, to go to the Narew and seize bridgeheads on its western bank). The 70th Army had just captured Brest and was clearing the area of the remnants of the German troops encircled there. The 47th Army was fighting in the Sedlec area with the front to the north. The 2nd Panzer Army, having got involved in the battle on the outskirts of Prague (a suburb of Warsaw on the eastern bank of the Vistula), repelled counterattacks by enemy tank formations. The 1st Polish Army, the 8th Guards and the 69th crossed the Vistula south of Warsaw near Magnuszew and Pulawy, captured and began to expand bridgeheads on its western bank - this was the main task of the troops of the left wing, they could and were obliged to fulfill it.

Such was the position of the troops of our front at the moment when an uprising broke out in the capital of Poland.

At one time, there were spiteful critics in the Western press who tried to accuse the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, of course, me, as commander, of allegedly deliberately not supported the Warsaw insurgents, doomed them to death.

In terms of its depth, the Belarusian operation is unparalleled. On the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front, Soviet troops advanced more than 600 kilometers. It cost a lot of effort and blood. To capture Warsaw with its powerful fortifications and numerous enemy garrison, it took time to replenish and train troops, pull up the rear. But in those days

we are going would do anything to support the rebels, to unite our efforts with them.

But those who pushed the Varsovians to revolt did not think about uniting with the approaching troops of the Soviet Union and the Polish army. They were afraid of it. They were thinking about something else seize in power to the capital until the arrival of Soviet troops in Warsaw. So ordered the gentlemen from London ...

The Polish comrades from Lublin took an active part in clarifying the events in Warsaw. Some time later, it became known that the uprising was organized by a group of AK officers and began on August 1 at the signal of the Polish government in exile from London. The uprising was led by General Bur-Komorowski and his assistant General Monter (commander of the Warsaw Military District). The leading role was played by the Craiova Army - its units were the most numerous, better armed and organized. All patriotic Warsaw residents joined the uprising, all those who burned with hatred for the German fascist

occupiers and the
desire to quickly expel the enslavers. Taking up arms, the Varsovians beat the enemy and
about nothing
did not think otherwise.

From everything that I managed to learn from the Polish comrades and from the extensive materials that came to the headquarters of the front,
one could
conclude that the leaders of the uprising tried to prevent any contact between the rebels and the Red Army. But time passed and
people

started
understand that he is being deceived. The situation in Warsaw became more and more difficult,
started
strife among the rebels. And only then did the leaders of the AK decide to appeal through London
To
Soviet command...

Having found a weak spot in our area - the gap between Prague and Siedlce (Siedlce), the enemy decided from here to strike at the
flank and rear of the troops
that were crossing the Vistula south of the Polish capital. To do this, he concentrated several divisions on the eastern coast near Prague:
the 4th Panzer, the
1st Panzer Hermann Goering, the 19th Panzer and the 73rd Infantry. On August 2, the Germans launched their counterattack, but were met on
the outskirts of Prague
by units of our 2nd Panzer Army approaching there from the south. A stubborn counter-fight ensued. The German troops were in a more

advantageous position, as they relied on the strong Warsaw fortified area.

It would seem that in this situation the Warsaw insurgents could try
capture the bridges
through the Vistula and capture Prague, striking the enemy from the rear. In this way they would have helped the troops of the 2nd Panzer Army, and
who knows how
events would have played out then. But this did not enter into the calculations of the London Polish government, whose three
representatives were in Warsaw,
nor into the calculations of Generals Boer and Monter. They did their dirty work and left, and the people provoked by them paid for
everything.

The 2nd Panzer Army, commanded by Chief of Staff Radzievsky, a capable, energetic general after Bogdanov was wounded, continued to
repulse enemy
attacks from the Prague area, cooperating with the 47th Army, which liberated Sedlec and pushed the enemy back to the northwest of it. A
very risky situation has
developed for us in this sector: the troops of the two armies, having turned their fronts to the north, stretched out in a thread, bringing all their
reserves into battle;
not left

nothing and
front reserve. There was only one way out - to accelerate the advance of the 70th Army from Brest and

rather, to pull the armies of generals Batov and Romanenko out of the forests of Belovezhskaya Pushcha.

Our right neighbor, the 2nd Belorussian Front, lagged somewhat behind, and the 65th Army, without encountering much resistance from the enemy, quickly overcame the forests of Belovezhskaya Pushcha, pulled ahead and then got into an unpleasant story, being attacked from two sides by units of two German tank divisions. They crashed into the center of the army, separated its troops

for a few

groups, depriving the army commander for some time of communication with most of the formations. There was such a moment when our units mixed up with the German ones and it was difficult to make out where ours was, where the enemy was; the battle took on a focal character ... "

G. I. Khetagurov, at that time the chief of staff of the 8th Guards Army, recalled how on August 4 he met with Rokossovsky and he told him about the Warsaw

Uprising: "For now, we known

little. There is evidence that detachments of the so-called Craiova Army, created by the Polish government in exile to restore the bourgeois system in the country, raised an almost unarmed people against the Nazi troops. They pushed honest patriots into an obvious adventure and did not even consider it necessary to inform us. And now they are asking for help. Of course, we help: we drop weapons, ammunition, medicines, food for the rebels from aircraft. But they expect more from us, and we are now incapable of more. The Soviet troops, weakened in previous battles, cannot break through to Warsaw. You yourself

know what is happening on the bridgeheads we have captured ... "

The counterattack of the 4th Panzer and 5th SS Viking Panzer Divisions against the 65th Army inflicted significant losses on it and did not allow it to take part in the attack on Warsaw.

The Soviet advance on Warsaw had actually stopped by 6 August. For new

The offensive required more thorough preparation of the operation, replenishment of losses in people and equipment, and the transfer of reinforcements and ammunition. On August 8, Zhukov and Rokossovsky proposed to Stalin to prepare and conduct the Warsaw offensive operation:

"We are reporting our thoughts on the further actions of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front and on basting plan for the Warsaw operation.

1. The front can start the Warsaw operation after the armies of the right wing reach the line

R. Narew and seize a bridgehead on its western bank in the Pultusk, Serock section.

The battle formations of these armies are removed from the Narew River at a distance of 120 km; it will take 10 days to cover this distance. Thus, the offensive operation by the armies of the right wing of the front, with their reaching the line of the river. Narew, must be carried out in the period from 10 to 20.8.44.

2. During the same time, on the left wing of the front, the forces of the 69th Army of the 8th Guards. army, 7th Guards. kk and

11th shopping mall it is necessary to carry out a private operation in order to expand the bridgehead on the western

bank of the river. Vistula, with the release of these armies to the line: Varka, Stromets, Radom, Wierzhbitsa.

To carry out this operation, it is necessary to transfer the 1st

the tank army of Katukov to the 1st Belorussian Front and send it from the Opatow region through Ostrovets, Senno, with the

task of attacking in a northerly direction to reach the front: Zvolen, Radom and thereby assist the 69th, 8th Guards. And, to

the 7th kki to the 11th mk in the defeat of the opposing enemy.

Along with this, it is necessary to raise the existing dividing line between the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts

to the north to the line: Krasnostav, the Ilzhanka River, Opochno, Piotrkuv. This will condense the battle formations

of the armies of the left wing of the 1st Belorussian Front and increase the strike power of our troops in the Radom

sector.

3. After carrying out these operations and with the release of the armies of the right wing of the front to the line of the river.

Narew, and the armies of the left wing to the front: Varka, Stromets, Radom, Wierzhbitsa, the troops will need at least 5 days

to relocate aviation, to pull up artillery and rear, as well as to transport ammunition and fuel and lubricants.

4. Taking into account the necessary time for preparation, the Warsaw operation can be started from 25.8.44 with all the forces

of the front, in order to reach the line: Ciechanow, Plonsk, Vyshogrud, Sochachev, Skierniewice, Tomaszow

and the occupation of Warsaw.

In this operation, for the offensive north of the river. Vistula to use three armies, the 1st tank and 1st cavalry corps, and

for the offensive south of the river. Vistula to use the 69th Army, 8th Guards. army, 1st tank and 2nd tank armies, two cavalry

corps, one tank corps and one army at the expense of

right wing of the front.

The 1st Polish Army in this operation will advance along the western bank of the river. Vistula with the task of capturing Warsaw in cooperation with the troops of the right wing and the center of the front.

5. Reporting the above, we ask you to approve our considerations for conducting further offensive operations of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front and our calculations of the time for their implementation.

Commenting on the plan of the Warsaw operation proposed by Zhukov and Rokossovsky, S. M. Shtemenko

writes that

“to defeat the enemy's Warsaw grouping was envisaged by the bilateral coverage of its

forces of the troops of both flanks of the 1st Belorussian Front. At the same time, one of the armies that crossed the Vistula, with a strike to the north along the western bank of the river, was supposed to cut this grouping. The starting areas for the offensive of the flank groups were to serve on the right flank - the bridgeheads on the Narew River in the area of Pultusk and Serock, which were to be captured, on the left flank - the bridgeheads already created by the 8th Guards and 69th armies on the Vistula at Magnuszew and Pulaw. Under the most favorable conditions, the operation could not begin until 25 August.

Stanislav Mikolajczyk these days was negotiating with I. V. Stalin and V. M. Molotov about position

affairs in Poland and Soviet-Polish relations. From the General Staff, AI Antonov was sometimes involved in the negotiations. Stalin firmly declared that Polish affairs would be discussed by the Poles themselves and

negotiations should be conducted with the Polish Committee of National Liberation. Londoners agreed. Bolesław Bierut, chairman of the

National Council of Narodowa, Bolesław Bierut, chairman of the PKNO Edward Osobka-Moravsky and others arrived in Moscow from Lublin.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army, General Michal Rola-Zhymerski, also arrived.

In the negotiations that followed, the parties remained, as they say, in their opinion. The last conversation between I. V. Stalin and Mikolajczyk took place on 9 August. During this conversation, Mikołajczyk was nevertheless forced to give more details about the Warsaw uprising and to say that the rebels were experiencing a serious shortage of weapons.

It soon became known to us at the General Staff that the Supreme Commander-in-Chief called

VCH K.K. Rokossovsky and ordered to reconsider the issue of the Warsaw operation, and
as
as a first step to organize the delivery of weapons to the rebels and to communicate with the leadership
rebels
drop a parachutist equipped with a walkie-talkie. This paratrooper, not knowing the location of the rebels,
immediately
fell into the clutches of the enemy.

On August 8, Bur-Komarovsky sent the following telegram to London:

"I am transmitting a telegram from the commander of the district leading the uprising in Warsaw. Pass it
on through Moscow
to Front Commander Rokossovsky.

"Since T August 1944, I have been fighting the Germans in Warsaw with the participation of the entire population
and all armed
detachments of the Home Army, and those who joined the battles: the Workers' Militia, the Army of Ludow,
the Polish Army
of Ludow and others.

We are fighting hard. The Germans, preparing escape routes, burn the city and destroy the population. Now
we are
holding back large German armored forces and infantry, but we feel a lack of ammunition and heavy weapons,
we need the quick help of the marshal's troops. A Soviet officer, Captain Kalugin, is at my headquarters, please
provide
him with radio communication data so that he can contact you and in this way give me the opportunity to
coordinate
actions.

Nurt (pseudonym of Colonel A. Hruszel), commander of the Warsaw district.

On August 9, the British military mission in Moscow turned to the General Staff of the Red Army with a request
to help the
Warsaw insurgents. She forwarded Bur-Komarovsky's appeal to the Soviet command, in which he asked for the
help of the Soviet troops in order to "accelerate the victory over our common enemy." On August 8, Molotov
received
representatives of the Polish government in
exile

S. Mikolajczyk, S. Grabsky, T. Romer and representatives of the Polish National Liberation Committee B. Bierut and E. Osobka-Moravsky
on the formation of a
coalition government. Here is a snippet of that conversation:

"He, Molotov, would like to add that when considering the policy of the Soviet Union in
respect
neighboring countries, especially Poland, it must be borne in mind that the Soviet Union is not the old tsarist
Russia.
Soviet Russia looks at relations with Poland with new eyes. Not all Poles

it is now understood. However, we are all encouraged by the messages that

come to us from all sides,
about the fraternal reception that the Polish population gives to the Red Army in Poland. The Soviet armies are welcomed in Poland with flowers, bread
and salt in
the most friendly way. We see this as a guarantee of a good future for our relations.

As regards the negotiations between the Polish National Liberation Committee and representatives of the London government, he, Molotov, can
only regret that no agreement was reached. But he, Molotov, hopes for a better future.

Mikolajczyk states that he not only hopes, but is sure that

agreement".

Despite mutual compliments, the parties were wary. In response to the proposal of Molotov and Bierut to arrive for negotiations in the part of
Poland occupied by
Soviet troops

Mikolajczyk replied that he was "not such a fool as to come and be arrested there." Molotov once again became convinced that
there was practically no chance that the
PKNO and the Polish government in London would agree on terms acceptable to the Soviet Union. Mikołajczyk insisted on maintaining, albeit with
certain exceptions and at
least temporarily, the Polish constitution of 1935, since the return to the constitution of 1921 deprived the Polish government of

exile

legitimacy. He also understood that the post of prime minister would give him only moral satisfaction, since the government would be sharply
dominated by communists
and their supporters, who controlled, in particular, the power ministries and enjoyed the support of the Red Army and

Soviet

military authorities in Poland. For Molotov, in turn, Mikolajczyk's proposal that control over the Polish armed forces should be carried out by
a special committee,
where the London Poles would have at least equal rights with

Moscow Poles.

On August 9, Stalin met with Mikolajczyk. On this day, German tank
parts in

Warsaw went to the Vistula and divided the territory occupied by the rebels into isolated enclaves.
According to the
Polish record, the conversation between the Soviet leader and the Polish prime minister went as follows:

"WITH. Mikolajczyk repeated his request, but this time he asked for immediate assistance to the Polish
forces in
Warsaw, where the Army of the People and the Home Army united in the fight against the Germans.

Marshal Stalin: What help do you need?

S. Mikołajczyk: Warsaw needs weapons. The Germans are not strong enough to drive the Poles out of their

positions, but concentrated their efforts on holding the two main communications from the city, the bridges across the Vistula. The fight flares up, and the Polish forces meet with a very significant enemy superiority.

Marshal Stalin: All these actions in Warsaw seem unrealistic. It could have been different if our troops were approaching Warsaw,

but, unfortunately, this did not happen. I expected that we would enter Warsaw on August 6, but we did not succeed. On August 4,

the Germans threw four tank divisions into the Prague area. Therefore, we failed to take Prague and we were forced to make a

roundabout maneuver near the Vistula in the Pilica region. As a result of this maneuver, we managed to advance on a front 25

km wide and 30 km deep. Yesterday the Germans launched a strong counterattack in this area with infantry and two tank divisions.

Therefore, our attack on Warsaw was faced with five new divisions from the German side, three of which are still in the Prague

area. I have no doubt that we will overcome these difficulties, but for these purposes we must regroup our forces and bring in

artillery. All this takes time. I really

sorry for your

people who got up so early in Warsaw and are fighting with rifles against German tanks, artillery and planes. I have been to Warsaw

and I know its narrow streets of the old city well, and therefore I confidently believe that holding the old city from a strategic point of view

is not very important. What will we achieve by providing air assistance? We can thus deliver a certain number of rifles and machine

guns, but not artillery. Finally, will weapons dropped from aircraft fall into the hands of the Poles without loss? It would be easier to

drop weapons in more remote areas, say Radom or Kielce, but to do so in a city with a dangerous concentration of German

forces is an extremely difficult task. However, it might work. We have to

to attempt.

What can be reset and when?

S. Mikołajczyk: I understand your doubts, but today it is too late to hesitate, because in Warsaw the fighting is going on non-

stop. Several objects were taken by our forces. At the headquarters of the insurgents in Warsaw, there is a Red Army

captain, Kalugin, who is trying to establish direct contact with the Soviet Supreme High Command, who, as it says in a telegram

sent through us, has presented you with a report on the real situation in

Warsaw. This report is
an accurate confirmation of our own information. The areas indicated in the telegram where weapons are to be dropped will be secured with barricades,
so there is no cause for concern.

Marshal Stalin: Can you rely on this information?

S. Mikolajczyk: Absolutely. As soon as direct contacts are established between the Polish
forces in

Warsaw and the Red Army, it will be possible to agree on signals where weapons can be dropped. Most of all we need grenades, small arms and
ammunition.

Germans

Also

attack from the air. If it were possible to protect Warsaw from the bombing of German aircraft with the help of Soviet fighters, then this
would be of great
importance not only from a military, but also from a psychological point of view, to support the rebels.

Marshal Stalin: Can our planes land?

S. Mikolajczyk: No, they can only drop weapons from the air. Marshal Stalin: It's easy.

S. Mikolajczyk: I ask you to give instructions to Marshal Rokossovsky.

Marshal Stalin: How can contacts be established? Encryption is necessary, since the ether is full of various kinds of signals. I can assure you that
for our
part we will do everything
what from us
depends to help Warsaw. To whom can we address this?

S. Mikolajczyk: Perhaps Captain Kalugin can help with that.

Marshal Stalin: He has no means of communication. Therefore, I will issue an order to drop an officer with a parachute to Warsaw with a code and with
the task of establishing contact. Will you help with this and give appropriate instructions?

S. Mikolajczyk: I will inquire of Warsaw immediately and send a reply to you. <...>

Before the end of the meeting, S. Mikolajczyk cordially addressed Marshal Stalin and again
referred

on his promise to do everything possible to provide assistance to the Soviet government. The Poles noted that Marshal Stalin assured them of this.

The Polish notation has important details missing from the Soviet one. First, Mikołajczyk pointed out that in Warsaw the Home Army united with the People's Army. Secondly, Stalin named August 6 as the day he expected to occupy Warsaw. Rokossovsky mentioned the same day in a conversation with Alexander Vert, a correspondent for the English newspaper The Sunday Times and the BBC radio company in Moscow. This proves that initially Stalin expected to capture Warsaw in the first ten days of August, but the German resistance and the uprising changed him.

plans.

From their conversations with Mikołajczyk, Stalin and Molotov realized that even if the Polish premier joined the PCWP, the Polish government in exile and the command of the Polish armed forces subordinate to him would not follow his example. Therefore, it was necessary to wait until the Germans put down the uprising. In the meantime, feed Mikołajczyk with promises that were not going to FULFILL.

Of course, Stalin could not be confused by requests for help from the Polish government in exile. The London Poles still agreed only to a coalition with the PCWN, and did not give a clear answer as to who would be at the head of the government. disagreed

they are on

disarmament of the Home Army. However, the prayers of dying Warsaw found a lively response from the Western public. Therefore, it was not very convenient to remain inactive for the Red Army, so as not to undermine relations with the allies. And Stalin decided to carry out the Warsaw operation, but to conduct it in such a way that in no case should Warsaw be taken until the uprising was crushed by the Germans. The operation was scheduled to begin on August 25, and Stalin hoped that by that time the Germans would have finished with the rebels.

The accusations made by Stalin, Molotov and Soviet generals against the Regional Army that it did not try to coordinate its actions with the Soviet command were completely unfounded. First, in the absence of diplomatic relations between Moscow and the Polish government, it was rather difficult to establish contact with the Soviet side. Secondly, and this is the main thing, when the commanders of the Home Army tried to establish such interaction on the ground, for them, as a rule, it ended tragically.

On August 14, Bur-Komarovsky wrote to London:

“Since the entry of Soviet troops into Polish territory in January 1944, parts of the AK

established contact with Soviet commanders to coordinate actions. So it was in Volhynia and Vilna region, in eastern Malopolyp, Bialystok and Lubelsk voivodeships. All contacts

ended in a sad experience, because after using our help on the battlefield, the commanders of all units and

subdivisions of the AK were arrested and the units were disarmed by the Soviet army. After such an experience, we did not

try to establish contact from Warsaw in advance with the Soviet command, waiting for the manifestation of their goodwill. As soon as the Soviet captain Kalugin arrived at the headquarters of the AK on August 3, he was received and placed

at the headquarters of the commander of the uprising. Through the mediation of Captain Kalugin, on August 7, the needs of

the AK for weapons and targets in Warsaw for aerial bombardment were transferred to the Soviet command. In addition, the commander

uprising

in Warsaw, sent a radiogram to Marshal Rokossovsky via London with a proposal to coordinate actions and provide assistance to Warsaw, unfortunately, to this day How

the telegram of Captain Kalugin and the commander of the uprising remained unanswered.

On August 16, the commander of the Regional Army gave an order to the commander of the Novogrudok subdistrict:

"The relationship of the Soviets to the AK in the territories they occupied (Lublin, Lvov, part of Warsaw, Krakow and Radom) is

negative. The NKVD insidiously arrests all commanders and initiative officers. Subdivisions and units are being disarmed, setting

the task of moving to Berling. The resistance of the Polish population is significant. The Soviets do not yet apply mass repressions against the population.

I gave orders to the commanders of the districts not to be deceived into arrest. Do not go to negotiations, invite Soviet

commanders to your place. After the "Storm" action, small detachments are immediately included in divisional formations, and those, in turn, are concentrated in areas convenient for defense.

In case of disarmament, resist.

In connection with the general situation, I order: to go over to the underground struggle, to sabotage the conscription into the

Berling army and into the Soviet units. Refrain from armed action against the Soviets. All your decisions of a

fundamental nature require my approval."

On August 13, the British military mission in Moscow, and on August 14, the American ambassador to the USSR, Averell Harriman,

requested that American aircraft assisting the Warsaw rebels be allowed to land at Soviet military bases.

Stalin rejected this proposal. He feared that then the British might risk landing in Warsaw, and in this case, the subsequent disarmament of the Home Army would be difficult. Yes, and with the help of the British and Americans, the rebels could hold out much longer, and this was not part of Stalin's plans.

On August 15, Molotov's deputy A. Ya. Vyshinsky replied to A. Harriman: "Dear Mr. Ambassador!

In connection with your letter dated August 14 addressed to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov, containing the message that the formation of the American air forces received an urgent instruction to clarify with the air forces of the Red Army the question of the possibility of a shuttle flight from England so that bombers and fighters would then proceed to bases in the Soviet Union, as well as a proposal that it was necessary to coordinate with the Soviet air forces a similar attempt to drop weapons in Warsaw, if such an operation were undertaken on that day by the Soviet side, on behalf of the People's I inform the Commissar that the Soviet Government cannot agree to this. The action in Warsaw, in which the Warsaw population is involved, is a purely adventurous affair,

And

The Soviet Government cannot put its hand to it. Marshal I. V. Stalin informed Mr. W. Churchill as early as August 5 that it was impossible to imagine how several Polish detachments of the so-called Home Army, which had neither artillery, nor aviation, nor

tanks, while the Germans fielded four tank divisions for the defense of Warsaw. I ask you, Mr. Ambassador, to accept the assurances of my highest consideration."

This was the verdict of the Warsaw Uprising. This sentence was also contained in a TASS statement published on August 13, 1944, which stated that the Polish government in exile did not make any attempts to notify the Soviet military command in advance and coordinate with them any offensive in Warsaw. Rokossovsky never received a direct stop order. But after August 13, he realized that his armies would not be given enough forces and means to take Warsaw until the Germans had finished with the rebels.

The troops of the 1st Belorussian continued to advance throughout the preparation of the Warsaw operation, but the lack of ammunition and poor preparation doomed the attacks to failure. Yes, 15

August

Rokossovsky issued an order to the commander of the 48th Army to temporarily suspend the offensive. There, in particular, it was said:

“The army did not fulfill the task I set. This was a consequence of the fact that the offensive battle was poorly organized, the formation of the battle formations of the corps and the army did not correspond

situation, a large number of forces and means were reserved, and for the offensive, forces and means were allocated completely insufficient. As a result, the enemy had the opportunity to organize defense on random, unprepared lines and to hold back the advancing army troops with small forces.

I order:

1. Temporarily suspend the offensive. During August 16 and 17, 1944, carefully reconnoiter the defense system and the fire system of the project; organize a battle, deliver ammunition and fuel, lubricating materials.

2. On the morning of August 18, 1944, go on a decisive offensive and carry out the previously assigned tasks.

From this order it can be seen that the German defense on the Vistula was not so strong, at least outside the Warsaw fortified area. German divisions in most cases had to occupy lines that were not prepared for defense.

Rokossovsky understood that only the presence of the Home Army prevented his troops from occupying Warsaw. And he unleashed his anger on the Polish government in London and the command of the Home Army. In expressions, he was not shy. After all, because of these, as Konstantin Konstantinovich believed, "adventurers" his soldiers were dying in vain.

On August 26, the marshal gave an interview in Lublin to the British journalist Alexander Werth. He stated in particular:

“I cannot go into details. I will only tell you the following. After several weeks of hard

fighting in Belorussia and eastern Poland, we eventually reached the outskirts of Prague around August 1st. At that moment, the Germans threw four tank divisions into battle, and we were

pushed back.

- How far back?

— I can't tell you exactly, but, say, a hundred kilometers. "Are you still retreating?"

— No, now we are advancing, but slowly.

— Did you think | August (as the correspondent of Pravda made it clear that day) that you could take Warsaw in a few days?

- If the Germans had not thrown all these tanks into battle, we could have taken Warsaw, although not frontal attack, but the chances of this have never been more than 50 out of 100. It was not excluded

the possibility of a German counter-attack in the Prague area, although we now know that before the arrival of these four panzer divisions, the Germans in Warsaw panicked and began to pack their bags in great haste.

Was the Warsaw Uprising justified in such circumstances?

— No, it was a gross mistake. The rebels started it at their own peril and risk, without consulting us.

- But there was a broadcast of the Moscow radio, calling them to an uprising?

Well, it was normal talk. Similar calls for an uprising were transmitted by the Svit radio station (the radio station of the Home Army. - B.S.), as well as the Polish edition of the BBC - at least they told me so, I myself did not hear. Let's talk seriously. An armed uprising in a place like Warsaw could be successful

only in that

if it were carefully coordinated with the actions of the Red Army. The right choice of time was a matter of the greatest importance here. Warsaw insurgents were bad

armed, and the uprising would only make sense if we were already prepared to enter Warsaw. We did not have such readiness at any of the stages, and I admit that some Soviet correspondents showed | August excessive optimism. We were pressed, and even under the most favorable circumstances we would not have been able to capture Warsaw before mid-August. But the circumstances did not turn out well, they were unfavorable for us. At war

such things

happen. Something similar happened in March 1943 near Kharkov and last winter near Zhitomir.

- Do you have any chances that in the next few weeks you will be able to take Prague?

- This is not a subject for discussion. The only thing I can tell you is that we will try to take over both Prague and Warsaw, but it will not be easy.

“But you have bridgeheads south of Warsaw.

— Yes, but the Germans go out of their way to eliminate them. It is very difficult for us to keep them, and we lose a lot of people. Please

note that we have more than two months of continuous fighting behind us. We have liberated the whole of Byelorussia and almost a quarter of Poland, but the Red Army can

get tired at times. Our losses were very great.

- Can't you provide air assistance to the Warsaw insurgents?

“We are trying to do it, but, in truth, it is of little use. The rebels entrenched only in certain points of Warsaw, and most of the cargo goes to the Germans.

Why can't you allow British and American planes to land behind Russian lines after they drop their cargo in Warsaw? Your refusal caused a terrible uproar in England and America ...

- The military situation in the area east of the Vistula is much more complicated than you imagine. And we don't want the English to be there on top of everything right now.

And

American planes. I think that in a couple of weeks we ourselves will be able to supply Warsaw

with

with the help of our low-flying aircraft, if the insurgents have any part of the territory in the city that can be seen from the air.

But dropping cargo in Warsaw from high altitude, as Allied aircraft do, is almost completely useless.

- Does the bloody massacre taking place in Warsaw and the destruction that accompanies it produce a demoralizing effect on the local Polish population?

- Of course it does. But the command of the Home Army made a terrible mistake. We are conducting military operations in Poland, we are the force that will liberate all of Poland in the coming months, and Bur-Komarovsky, together with his henchmen, stumbled here like a redhead in a circus -

like that clown who appears in the arena at the most inopportune moment and turns out to be wrapped in a carpet ... If here it was just about clowning, it would not matter, but we are talking about a political adventure, and this adventure will cost Poland hundreds of thousands of lives. This is a terrible tragedy, and now they are trying to shift all the blame for it onto us. It pains me to think of the thousands and thousands of people who died in our struggle for the liberation of Poland.

Do you really think that we would not have taken Warsaw if we had been in a position to do so? The very idea that we are in some sense afraid of the Home Army is absurd to the point of idiocy.

When Konstantin Konstantinovich said that the calls of radio stations for an armed uprising were just "ordinary conversations," he was deceitful. After all, both the call of the radio station of the Home Army, and the calls of radio stations controlled by Moscow, were guided by

quite

a real uprising expected in Warsaw. Only in London it was believed that it would be led by the Home Army, and in Moscow - by the People's Army. But the pro-communist People's Army took a rather minor part in the Warsaw Uprising. Thus, Lieutenant of the Home Army Ryszard Jankowski, captured by the Germans, testified during interrogation that "the

communists took a very weak part in the uprising. Only a very small part of the AL actively participated in the uprising. It is

believed in AK circles that most of the AL, especially the political luminaries of the PPR, have remained underground in order to better monitor and expose the AK command. The PPR in its press subjected AK to sharp attacks, in particular, pointing out that the British had abandoned the Poles and

the success of the uprising can only be achieved with the help of Russia. The AK could no longer effectively defend itself against such attacks, as the responsible persons were afraid that after the arrival of the Soviets they would be held accountable for this.

As a Pole and a native of Warsaw, Rokossovsky undoubtedly felt sorry for his native city and the rebels heroically fighting on its streets. But he already fully identified himself with the Soviet Union and the Red Army when he said "we" to Werth.

And for them, the Polish government in London and the Home Army were enemies, and Rokossovsky them only in this capacity and

considered. And more he felt sorry for his soldiers, and not the fighters of the Home Army.

The Germans, it seems, began to guess that the Russian troops would not be able to take Warsaw as long as the detachments of the Home Army were holding there.

Therefore, back in mid-August, the German tank divisions, which had thoroughly battered the Soviet 2nd Panzer Army operating beyond the Vistula, were

transferred to the Baltic coast in order to cut a corridor to Army Group North, which was cut off from Germany. The operation began on August 16, and in the

very first days the presence of tank divisions transferred from near Warsaw was recorded by intelligence of the 1st Baltic Front. By the end of the month, the Germans managed to push back the Soviet troops from the Baltic coast and restore land communications with Army Group North. But this operation lost its

meaning in the event of a Soviet attack on Warsaw. Weakened German forces

failed

to hold him back, and even more so to keep the front from Latvia to the Oder in the north. However, the troops of the 1st

Belorussian Front on the Vistula did not budge while the German 3rd Panzer Army fought its way to the Baltic

Sea at Tukums. Instead of an offensive on the Vistula on August 21

began

Soviet offensive in Romania. Among the German soldiers, as evidenced by the report of the Einsatzkommando of the Rek Combat Team of 24 August

1944, the belief prevailed that "Warsaw could not be held unless the Russians were stopped in the northeast and

southeast

from the city."

But if, after the start of the battle near Tukums, the 1st tank

the army of M. E. Katukov, and the troops of Rokossovsky would receive replenishment with tanks and ammunition, they

would be able to immediately attack the Polish capital, and the Germans would not be able to defend it. But the rebels still

held out, and Stalin was still not going to help them.

On August 16, Stalin wrote to Churchill:

"1. After a conversation with Mr. Mikołajczyk, I ordered that the Command of the Red Army intensively drop weapons in the Warsaw area. A liaison paratrooper was also dropped, who, as the command reports, did not achieve his goal, as he was killed by the Germans.

Later, having become more familiar with the Warsaw affair, I became convinced that the Warsaw action was a reckless, terrible adventure, costing the

population great sacrifices. This would not have happened if the Soviet command had been informed before the start of the Warsaw action and if

the Poles maintained contact with the latter.

In the situation that had arisen, the Soviet command came to the conclusion that it must dissociate itself from the Warsaw adventure, since it could not bear either direct or indirect

responsibility for the Warsaw action.

In the same spirit and on the same day, Molotov wrote to Kerr: "The Soviet Government, of course, cannot object to British or American planes dropping weapons in the Warsaw area, considering that this is the business of the Americans and the British themselves. But the Soviet Government, of course, objects to American or British

aircraft after dropping weapons in the Warsaw area, they landed on Soviet territory, since

The Soviet Government does not want to associate itself either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw.

And on August 22, Stalin responded to the message of F. Roosevelt and W. Churchill dated August 20, in which they proposed doing everything to save as many rebels in Warsaw as possible:

"Sooner or later, but the truth about a handful of criminals who started the Warsaw adventure for the sake of seizing power will become known to everyone. These people used the gullibility of the Varsovians by throwing MANY ALMOST unarmed people under the German guns, tanks and aircraft. A situation has arisen in which every new day is used not by the Poles for the cause of the liberation of Warsaw, but by the Nazis, who inhumanly exterminate the inhabitants of Warsaw.

From a military point of view, the situation that has arisen, which attracts the increased attention of the Germans to Warsaw, is also very unfavorable for both the Red Army and the Poles. Meanwhile Soviet The troops, which have lately met with new significant attempts by the Germans to go over to counterattacks, are doing everything possible to break these counterattacks of the Nazis and go over to a new broad offensive near Warsaw. There can be no doubt that the Red Army is not

will regret efforts to defeat the Germans near Warsaw and free Warsaw for the Poles. This will be the best and real help to the anti-Nazi Poles."

One might think that the Germans remembered the defense of Warsaw only because the Polish uprising had begun there!

In principle, the Warsaw operation was quite feasible. Only needed

transfer the 1st tank
army to the 1st Belorussian Front, replenish the 1st and 2nd tank armies with armored vehicles, and all the armies with personnel and
ammunition.

In order to break up the Warsaw grouping of the enemy and open a direct road to Berlin, it would be worthwhile, if we take into account only strategic
considerations,
to postpone the Soviet offensive against Romania, scheduled for August 20th. In case if

Soviet

troops knocked the Germans from the Vistula line and pushed them back to the Oder, the German command would certainly have to begin the
withdrawal of troops
from Romania, and the Romanian government in this case would almost certainly have withdrawn from the war and opened hostilities against the
Wehrmacht - which
was the goal of the Soviet offensive. By the end of August, German troops also suffered

heavy

defeat in France, when the main forces of the German tank divisions were destroyed during the battle in the Falaise pocket. The Allies reached the borders
of
Germany, which gave a real chance

end the war in 1944.

However, the Home Army still held out in Warsaw. And so Stalin was in no hurry
occupy

the Polish capital while a force beyond his control fought there. Iosif Vissarionovich preferred to make a throw to the Balkans in order to guarantee their
transition to the Soviet sphere of influence and prevent Anglo-American landings there. The plan for the Warsaw operation was approved by him, but the
1st
Belorussian Front did not receive the necessary means of strengthening. The result was a planned failure.

K. F. Telegin recalled:

“On the appointed day, this operation began. However, carried out without proper preparation, not supported by the necessary reserves, it
ended, in short, with the
aforementioned
higher

with a modest result - the troops of the right wing, having overcome the resistance of the enemy in long battles, reached the Narew and
captured bridgeheads

there. On the southern wing, the successes of the troops advancing from the bridgeheads were marked by even more modest results. At this, the
operational offensive capabilities of the troops of the front were completely exhausted, its formations were even more weakened. It became clear that
without thorough
and lengthy preparations, without an impressive accumulation of troops, the task of overcoming the Vistula Wall on a wide front and liberating Warsaw
could not be
carried out.

The Western allies were shown the impossibility of taking Warsaw at the moment, which Stalin wanted to prove. This was the main goal of the offensive of the 1st Belorussian Front. And Rokossovsky understood this. The other goal, obviously, was to exhaust

German divisions concentrated on the Vistula and Narew. However, this did not take into account What

Soviet troops were even more exhausted and suffered heavy losses, completely unjustified from the point of view of the superiority in forces and means that they had at that moment

disposed.

On August 18, troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front took Sandomierz. August 21 Rokossovsky on behalf of

The Headquarters gave directives to the 48th, 65th, 28th and 70th armies to force the Narewa, which would allow "to launch large offensive operations beyond the river. Narew against East Prussia. It was to the borders of East Prussia that the center of gravity of the front's actions mixed up.

On August 25, the military council of the 48th Army complained to the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front about the lack of tanks, which does not allow to shoot down the enemy infantry from the occupied lines as quickly as we would like, and reported losses and replenishments:

"In just one day on 24.8.44, there were 224 people killed and 717 wounded ... In the course of the last battles, the composition of military units has changed significantly, and first of all, rifle

regiments.

The main contingent is the new replenishment. The number of servicemen - privates who have been at the front since 1942 and even more so since 1941 - is calculated in units.

During the period from June 20 to August 20, 1944, the army lost 4,787 people killed and 19,815 wounded. Behind

this time, 26,614 people were mobilized and put into operation due to the conscription in the territory liberated from the enemy.

Thus, the entire personnel of the rifle companies are replenishment fighters called up in the regions of Eastern and Western Belarus (the percentage of saturation with Belarusians reached 63.3).

According to the reviews of some officers and privates - war veterans, the replacements do not yet have combat training.

Assessing the replacement soldiers, the commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 391st Rifle Regiment, Captain Samokhvalov, states: "You need to work and work with these fighters. They have absolutely no military training, are not accustomed to military discipline, have not been in battles, and they have little real soldierly spirit. Many of them during all three years of the war were only fleeing from the Germans, hanging around in different places.

You have to work with them for a long time and hard, otherwise they can let you down during the battle.

It should be taken into account that the figures on the dead are most likely underestimated (it turns out that on August 24 their number was almost three times higher than the average daily number of those killed in two months of fighting), and the data on the missing are not given at all. Due to this, the real irretrievable losses of the 48th Army could be two to three times higher and reach 10-14 thousand people. But even in this case, the conscription directly in part of the Belarusian population covered the losses of the 48th Army by at least 80-90 percent.

And the argument about the poor preparation of local reinforcements was actually worth little, since due to heavy losses in the Red Army, poorly trained recruits prevailed in the units for almost the entire war. It was Stalin who invented a new way of waging war - the massive introduction of practically untrained reinforcements into battle, which suffered particularly heavy losses.

The German defense on the outskirts of the Lower Narew turned out to be unexpectedly strong. By the end of August, five new German divisions were transferred to the area of Zegrza, Serock and Pultusk. Only on September 4-6 did the 48th and 65th armies cross the Narew and create bridgeheads near Ruzhan and Serotsk.

And here is the report received at the end of August to Rokossovsky by the commander of the 47th Army, Gusev, who unsuccessfully tried to capture Prague:

"The 47th A with the main forces at the beginning of August 1944 reached the line: Sedlec, Kalushin, Minsk-Mazovetsky, Karchev, having divisions of 4,000 to 4,500 people. IN flow

August army troops fought continuous battles with the task of capturing the Prague region. The fighting was long and extremely stubborn. As a result, in the month of August, the divisions advanced 25-45 km, reached the line: Krashev Star - Lininki - Lesnyakovizna. The protracted nature of the fighting and the weak pace

army advances are explained by the exceptional stubbornness of the defending elite

parts of

the pr-ka (TD SS Viking, Dead Head, penal and special units), covering the approaches to the Warsaw fortified bypass, and the small number of rifle divisions included in compound

army troops. The 129th and 77th squadrons bore the brunt of the fighting. The weak divisions of these corps in August suffered losses of more than 7,000 people, several regimental commanders, and more than 500 officers were out of action.

During the same time, it was possible to inject replenishment into all divisions due to withdrawal from the rear, return from hospitals and other internal resources - about 3,000 people. To date number

the division has been brought to such a strength that there is almost no infantry at all; divisions of the 129th SC in terms of numbers

less than 3500 people, divisions of the 77th sk about 4000 people each. In rifle regiments - 300

shooters, companies of 20-40 people each.

Throughout the month of August, the troops feel a lack of ammunition, and on 29.8.1944, the provision for the main types of ammunition ranges from 0.2 to 0.6 BC.

With such a state of army formations, it becomes difficult to carry out serious tasks without reinforcement with tanks, aircraft and replenishment of divisions. To accomplish the task, according to the directive of the front headquarters No. 0087601, the 76th Rifle Division, covering the Prague-Minsk-Mazowiecki direction, decided to remove skis from sector 125 on August 30, 1944, to bring it into the lane 129 sk.

Reporting on the foregoing, I ask for your order:

1. Speed up the supply of ammunition to the army.
2. To equip the army with 300-500 officers in the platoon-company link. 3. Speed up the supply of uniforms for the arriving replenishment.
4. Strengthen the army with at least a small number of tanks and replenish the existing regiments of self-propelled artillery with materiel.
5. Support the battle of the 129th sk and 77th sk during 31.8.44 with ground attack aircraft.

If Stalin had bothered to send Rokossovsky replenishment with armored vehicles and shells, the outcome of the hostilities of the 1st Belorussian Front near Warsaw would have been different. But the Supreme Commander preferred to primarily supply the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian fronts operating in Romania. He didn't need Warsaw yet.

On August 30, a representative of the General Staff, Major General Revyakin, informed Zhukov about the arrival of untrained reinforcements in the 8th Guards Army: "In the second half of August, it arrived from

Belarusian Military District to strengthen Guards. divisions of the 8th Guards. army 5488 people, in
including
5102 people - natives of the Brest and Pinsk regions. All untrained.

In addition, during August, up to 2,000 former servicemen released from Lublin camps and prisons were transferred to divisions
for resupplying.

The supply of such a large number of little-studied, untested and not participating in battles reinforcements to the guards,
with a small number of divisions and a low staffing of rifle companies, creates a ratio in which the main combat core of the
guards is dissolved in the composition of the newly poured reinforcements.

Considering the expediency of using the 8th Guards. And as a shock offensive breakthrough army, I consider it extremely
necessary
to equip the army from the regions of the country with the expectation of bringing the division to 6000-6500 people each and
stirring the
newcomer
replenishment".

This wish remained empty. The resources of the internal military districts were already
in many ways
exhausted. It was necessary to call mainly residents of territories previously under German occupation, as well as
released
prisoners and "Ostarbeiters".

In the combat log of the 1st Belorussian Front, the results of the August battles were summed up:

"During August 1944, the troops of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front, successfully developing the offensive,
crossed
the Nurets River, the Western Bug, Brok, captured 800 settlements, including the cities of Vengruv, Kalushin, Liv, Malkinya-
Gurna, Minsk-
Mazowiecki, Ostrow Mazowiecki, Sokoluv, Tlushch, Ciechanowiec, advanced to a depth of 100 km, reached the river.
Narew from
Pul-Tusk to its mouth, crossed the river. Narew and captured a bridgehead to the west. the banks of this river.

The enemy, clinging to intermediate lines, sought to put up stubborn resistance to our advancing troops
in order to gain time to
prepare the defense of the line on

the western bank of
the Narew and the systematic withdrawal of its troops to this line.

The troops of the right wing of the front, continuing the relentless offensive, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, did not allow him to carry out a planned withdrawal and crushed the retreating enemy units with a strong blow in the Pultus direction, crossing the river on their shoulders. Narew and secured the captured bridgehead.

The troops of the left wing of the 1st Belorussian Front retained their position on the outskirts of Prague, repelling enemy attempts to push back our units in the north. - East of Prague and thereby strengthen its position on the outskirts of Warsaw.

In late July - early August 1944, our units, developing a swift offensive, reached the river. Vistula, crossed this river, seized a bridgehead to the west. coast and during August fought for the expansion of the captured bridgeheads.

The enemy, attaching great importance to holding positions in the west. bank of the river Vistula, pulling up the reserve, was able to gain a foothold. But to liquidate the bridgeheads occupied by our troops in the west. bank of the river Vistula, despite repeated attempts, he failed.

As a result of the fighting, our units expanded their bridgeheads to 47 km along the front and 11 km in depth - southeast.
Varka and 29 km along the front, 8 km in depth - southwest. Pulaws.

During the August offensive, the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front liberated an area of more than 4,000 square meters. km.

Destroyed: enemy soldiers and officers over 116,000 people; tanks and self-propelled guns - 1562; guns and mortars of various calibers - 2100; machine guns - 4343; motor vehicles and tractors 2517.

Captured prisoners - 2844; tanks and self-propelled guns - 91; guns and mortars of various calibers - 691; machine guns - 1136; machine guns and rifles - 8440, motor vehicles and tractors - 279, various warehouses - 36.

In the appendix to the combat log of the 1st Belorussian Front, you can find data

on the losses

of personnel of the 1st Belorussian Front in August: killed - 23,483, wounded - 76,130, missing - 2975, for other reasons - 11,812, in total - 114,400 people. The

German losses in the journal were, as usual, indicated so that the enemy's irretrievable losses alone were approximately equal to all the losses of

the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front. In fact, the irretrievable losses of all German ground forces in August 1944 amounted to 64,000 killed and 407,640

missing. Of the missing, the bulk were prisoners captured by the Allies in the Falaise pocket (where the Germans lost 25 thousand killed and 40 thousand

prisoners, in addition, about 80 thousand Germans were captured in August in the rest of France) and Soviet troops in the Iasi-Kishinev pocket in

Romania (where the Germans lost more than 100 thousand prisoners and up to 10 thousand killed, most of whom were classified as missing lead).

In addition, the Germans could lose up to 8 thousand killed in the fight against the insurgents in Warsaw. If we take on faith the reports of the 1st Belorussian

Front, it turns out that the Germans lost 113 thousand killed in battles with him, which is almost twice as high as the losses of the Wehrmacht at all

fronts. It is more realistic that the German losses in the battle on the Vistula could be 20-25

thousand people, which, along with almost three thousand prisoners, is approximately equal to declared

irretrievable losses of the 1st Belorussian Front (real irretrievable losses of Rokossovsky's troops could be 2-3 times higher).

The fact that the real losses were higher than in the final report can be judged from the following report. On August 28, the representative of

the General Staff at the headquarters of the 8th Guards Army, Lieutenant Colonel Rybak, informed Zhukov:

"1. From August 1 to August 26, 1944, the army lost 35,649 people (killed, wounded and missing). During the same time, the army received replenishment of 10,237 people, which does not cover the losses incurred.

So, for example: 4th Guards. sk only in the battles for the bridgehead from 1 to 26.8.1944 lost 7777 people and during the same time received a replenishment of 3081

people. To date, rifle divisions have been reduced to 4000-4200 people, mainly due to rifle companies: rifle companies number 30-35 people each.

2. In recent days, in the battles for the expansion of the bridgehead, fatigue of the troops is felt, there is no combat

gust - lethargy, daily losses greatly reduce the composition of small companies,

as a result,
the battles to expand the bridgehead do not give the proper result.

So, for example: 4th Guards. On August 26, 1944, the back of the battle advanced an average of 1-2 km (on a front of 10 km), while losing 405 people, mainly due to active bayonets, which in general equals 11 rifle companies (35 people each).

3. I consider it appropriate:

a) For the Polish army, expand the defense zone on the bridgehead by placing one sd of the 8th Guards in the second line (in the rear). A. Due to the expansion of the band of the Polish army - sk of the 8th Guards. And take it in turn to the rear, where to give the troops rest, replenish them and train them, i.e. prepare troops for the upcoming offensive operations.

6) To further expand the bridgehead of the Polish army, solve private offensive tasks.

4. 7th Guards Cavalry body - to force the river. Vistula in the area Kobylnitsa - Vargotsyn and in cooperation with the troops of the 8th Guards. And to clear the district of the river from the enemy. Radomka, Severynow-Kuzenice road.

On August 29, 1944, the Headquarters ordered the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Belorussian and 4th Ukrainian fronts to go on the defensive.

The exception was the troops of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front, two armies of the 2nd

Belorussian Front, which, in particular, was ordered: "1. The right wing of the troops of the front, with the receipt of this directive, will go over to a tough defense. The forces of the 43rd and 3rd armies, no later than 4-5.9, reach the river. Narev, seize a bridgehead on the western bank of the river in the Ostrolenka area, and then also move on to a tough defense.

On September 5, a message from the British War Cabinet was transmitted to the Soviet NKID, which, in particular, stated:

"The War Cabinet wishes the Soviet Government to know that public opinion in this country has been deeply affected by the events in Warsaw, as well as by the terrible suffering of the Poles who are there. Regardless of right or wrong with regards to the start

uprisings in

Warsaw, the population of Warsaw itself cannot be held responsible for the decisions made. Our

the people cannot understand why no material aid was sent to the Poles in Warsaw from outside. The fact that such assistance could not be sent due to

your Government's refusal to allow United States aircraft to land on airfields in Russia is now becoming public knowledge. If, besides all this, the Poles

in Warsaw are now crushed by the Germans, which, we are told, must occur within two or three days, the blow to public opinion here cannot be accounted

for. The War Cabinet itself finds it difficult to understand your Government's refusal to take into account the obligations of the British and American

Governments to assist the Poles in Warsaw. Your Government's action in preventing the dispatch of this aid seems to us contrary to the spirit of Allied cooperation

to which you and we attach so much importance both now and in the future.

Out of respect for Marshal Stalin, as well as for the Soviet people, with whom we sincerely wish

to work in future years, the War Cabinet wishes to address the Soviet Government with the following appeal: to provide every possible assistance that can

be in its power and, among other things, to provide an opportunity for United States aircraft to land for this purpose at your airfields.

This message was followed by the answer of the Soviet government:

The Soviet Government has already communicated to the British Government its opinion that what the

the Warsaw adventure, undertaken without the knowledge of the Soviet Military Command and in violation of the latter's operational plans, is the responsibility of

the figures of the Polish government in exile in London.

The Soviet Government would like an impartial commission to be organized to find out exactly on whose order the uprising in Warsaw was started and who

is to blame for the fact that the Soviet military command was not notified of this in advance. No command in the world, either British or American, can put up with the

fact that in front of the front of its troops an uprising is organized in a big city without the knowledge of this command and contrary to its operational plans. It

is clear that the Soviet command should not be

exception.

There is no doubt that if, before the uprising in Warsaw, the Soviet command had been requested
O

the expediency of arranging an uprising in Warsaw in early August, the Soviet command would have dissuaded from such an undertaking,
because the Soviet

troops, who had fought over 500 kilometers and were quite tired, were not then ready to storm Warsaw, bearing in mind that the Germans by
that time they had

already managed to transfer their tank reserves from the west to the Warsaw region (in fact, in the twentieth of July, when the Polish government
was deciding on the

uprising, the Soviet troops were rapidly moving towards Warsaw, hoping to take it by August 6. - B.

182)

No one can reproach the Soviet Government for allegedly providing insufficient assistance to the Polish people, including Warsaw. The
most effective form of

assistance
are

active military operations of the Soviet troops against the German occupiers in Poland, which made it possible to liberate more than a quarter
of Poland.

All this is the work of the Soviet troops and only the Soviet troops shedding blood for the liberation of Poland. Remains ineffective form

assistance to Warsaw residents, namely, dropping weapons, medicines, food from aircraft. Several times we dropped both weapons
and food supplies to the

Warsaw insurgents, but each time we received information that what had been dropped had fallen into the hands of the Germans. If, however, you

strongly

believe in the effectiveness of such assistance and insist that the Soviet command organize, together with the British and Americans,
the supply of such

assistance, the Soviet Government can agree to this. It is only necessary that this help

turned out to

predetermined plan.

As regards your attempt to make the Soviet Government in any way responsible

for the Warsaw adventure and for the victims of the Warsaw people, the Soviet Government cannot
This

viewed differently, as a desire to shift responsibility from a sick head to a healthy one. The same must be said about the fact that the
position of the Soviet

Government on the question of Warsaw allegedly contradicts the spirit of allied cooperation. There can be no doubt that if the British Government
had taken measures to

ensure that the Soviet command was warned in time about the planned uprising in Warsaw, then things with Warsaw would have taken a completely
different turn.

Why didn't the British Government see fit to warn about this?

Soviet

government? Did not the same thing happen here as in April 1943, when Polish

the government in exile, in the absence of opposition from the British Government, came out with its slanderous hostile to the Soviet Union

statement about

Katyn? It seems to us that the spirit of allied cooperation would suggest to the British Government a different course of action.

As regards public opinion in this or that country, the Soviet Government expresses its full confidence that a truthful presentation of the facts about the events

in Warsaw will provide full grounds for public opinion to unreservedly condemn the authors of the Warsaw adventure and to correctly understand the

position of the Soviet Government. We just need to try to make public opinion well aware of the truth about the events in Warsaw."

Almost every word here is a lie. And about Katyn, and about the fact that the uprising did not correspond to the operational plans of the Soviet command. On the contrary, as we have already seen, at the beginning of August Stalin, Zhukov and Rokossovsky were determined to take Warsaw. And the uprising of the Varsovians was assumed by the Soviet command even during the planning of the Belarussian operation.

Now, Stalin was ready to lay the blame for the failures of the Soviet troops on the Warsaw insurgents: they, they say, by their reckless and untimely actions attracted the attention of the Germans to the Warsaw region. As if even without an uprising, the German command did not understand the danger that the Soviet troops would break through the front on the Vistula, and did not seek to hold back their advance. Moreover, the German tank divisions defeated the 2nd Panzer Army even before the start of the Warsaw Uprising. It is not surprising that after the war, the Polish emigration openly, and the Poles in Poland, in private conversations, reproached the Soviet government both for Katyn and for the fact that the Red Army did not provide the necessary assistance to the Warsaw Uprising.

On September 6, the 2nd Panzer Army was withdrawn to the front reserve. By that time, it was clear that there would be no attack on Warsaw, and the losses of the army amounted to 989 tanks and self-propelled guns, exceeding the number of armored vehicles in the army by the beginning of the Lublin-Warsaw operation.

S. M. Shtemenko recalled:

"In early September, reconnaissance of the 1st Belorussian Front discovered that one of the enemy's tank divisions and some of his other troops, previously located near Prague, appeared

in front
of our bridgeheads on the Vistula. Obviously, the Nazi command expected that
We
let's increase our activity there. The distraction of the enemy forces could be used to strike at Prague. Reported to the Supreme Commander. He
gave the
appropriate order.

On September 10, the 47th Army launched an offensive. After it moved the 1st Polish Army. The actions of the troops were distinguished by great
assertiveness.
On the night of September 13, they broke into Prague. That's when

it was necessary to raise an uprising in Warsaw in order to prevent the Nazis from destroying bridges,
seize
them and thereby help the Soviet soldiers cross to the left bank of the Vistula, to the city center! But the bridges were blown up by the
enemy, a wide river
separated our troops from Warsaw, which had been fighting for the forty-fifth day. All attempts to cross the water barrier on the move and cross to the
left bank
of the Vistula, undertaken by the intelligence of the 47th Army, were repulsed.

The population of the suburbs of Warsaw-Prague greeted their liberators, the Soviet and Polish soldiers, with great enthusiasm.
Women under fire looked
after the wounded, fed and watered them, and buried the dead.

By order of K.K. Rokossovsky, the sector of the front on the Vistula in front of Warsaw was transferred to the troops of Sigmund Berling, and the
47th Army
advanced to the north. Soviet and Polish troops
went to
frontiers from where it was possible to give a helping hand to the insurgent Warsaw.

Of course, the defeat of the Nazi troops in Prague was already known on the other side of the Vistula. But the leaders of the rebels from the London
camp continued to
stick to their line and did not take a step towards us. They were still silent, did not try to establish contact, although, as the British government
reported, the
population of Warsaw was experiencing incredible difficulties.

The leaders of the detachments of the People's Army, who voluntarily joined the uprising in order to be with the population of Warsaw at a
difficult hour,
immediately sent two girls
liaison to
the other bank of the Vistula, as soon as the Soviet troops approached Prague. Risking their lives, young patriots went to the location of our
army. It was from them
that the Soviet and Polish command for the first time learned details about the nature of the uprising, the situation in the city, the location
and state of
forces.

rebels.

Now the rebellious Varsovians, the Soviet troops and the Polish Army were separated, as we then thought, only by the river.

But everything turned out to be much more complicated, and the predatory

political

the prudence of the rabble of the Panic state. But more on that later.

On the afternoon of September 13, A. I. Antonov and I reported to the Supreme Commander on

position

on the 1st Belorussian Front, and in particular in Warsaw. He ordered that everything possible be done to provide assistance, including improving the supply

of weapons, ammunition and other materiel to the rebels from the air. We gave instructions to the front and aviation. The attempts made that same night to

transfer weapons and ammunition to Warsaw were crowned with success, and a day later the regular supply of the rebels began.

After our report, I. V. Stalin picked up the phone and spoke on the HF with K. K. Rokossovsky. The front commander reported that his troops were now

unable to liberate Warsaw. JV Stalin treated these words with understanding and did not insist. He once again reminded Antonov and me that it was

necessary to establish contact with the rebels - actions in this regard had already begun. In addition, he ordered G.K. Zhukov, who had

just returned from the Ukrainian

fronts, to return to the 1st Belorussian again: "You are your own person there. Deal with Warsaw on the spot and take whatever action is necessary. Is it

possible to carry out a private operation there to force the Vistula precisely by the troops of Berling ... It would be very important ... The task

Poles

put them personally together with Rokossovsky and help them organize the matter yourself. They are still inexperienced." In practice, the Polish army was sent to

the slaughter in order, on the one hand, to meet the wishes of the Polish soldiers and officers to help their brothers in Warsaw, and on the other hand, to

demonstrate to the Western allies that Warsaw could not be taken because of too

strong

German resistance."

It turns out that only in mid-September, a month and a half after the start of the uprising, did Stalin allow cargo to be dropped from Soviet aircraft. Perhaps he expected

that now the Varsovians would treat the pro-communist People's Army with great sympathy, convinced of the "adventurism" of Bur-

Komarovsky. But it was not to be expected. Rather, Stalin hoped that the ostentatious attempt by the Polish 1st Army to occupy Warsaw, firstly, would

demonstrate the desire of the Soviet Union to help the rebels, and secondly, would force the Germans

hurry up with

liquidation of the uprising. It is possible that the German command was not in a hurry in this matter, not without reason believing that as long as the uprising continued, Stalin would have less

incentives to take over Warsaw. But now, when the Soviet troops occupied Prague and there was a threat of their connection with the rebels, it became dangerous to delay the liquidation of the uprising. The capture of the bridgeheads in the left-bank part of the city by the Berling fighters may have become a signal for the Germans that it was time to put an end to the rebels.

On September 13, the headquarters of the 1st Belorussian Front issued a combat order on the offensive of the 47th and 1st Polish armies on Prague:

"1. Parts of the 3rd TD SS "Totenkopf", 1st cd (c) (Hungarian. - B. S.), 73rd infantry division, 19th TD, 540th penal battalion and 9th assault battalion of the enemy stubbornly defend the Struga line, east. edge of the forest (1 km west of Maziolka), Marki, Zacishe, east. the outskirts of Prague, Spaska Kempa, trying to keep the Prague area and prevent further advance of our troops in the northwestern and western direction.

2. The 47th Army, advancing on Prague, at 17.00 13.9. 44 is fighting at the line of Nadma, Maziolki, Drevnitsa station, Boinya, Elsneruv, Loss, Vitolin, VDKCH. (2 km southwest of Vitolin).

The commander of the troops of the front ordered:

1. 1st A (P) (Polish. - B.S.) 15.9.44 to change units of the 47th Army in the Yelsneruv, Loss, Vitolin VDKCH sector. (2 km southwest of Vitolin) and in the morning of 16.9.44, with all the forces of the army, go on a decisive offensive with the task of capturing the city and the Prague region and reaching the eastern bank of the Vistula River in the Peltsovizna, Prague, Lyas sector.

From 12.00 15.9.44 establish a dividing line between 47th A and 1st A (P): Kolbel, Gorashka (9 km north of Otwock), Milosna Star, Elsneruv, Annopol, all points for 1st A (11) inclusive.

2. To the commander of the 47th Army, bring the replacement units into the army zone and use them for an offensive in the main direction, and transfer the 1st BPD with its combat area on September 15, 1944 to the 1st A (P).

On September 14, Prague was liberated by units of the 47th and 1st Polish Army. The losses of the 1st Polish Infantry

Division in the battles for Prague amounted to 1900 people, including 355 killed. The losses of the 1st Belorussian

Front for the second decade of September amounted to 17.5 thousand people, including about

three thousand killed.

1] September Bur-Komarovsky turned to Rokossovsky through London. His message to Moscow

received September 14th. It said:

"The information received today by Prime Minister Mikolajczyk about the upcoming cooperation in providing assistance to the fighting

Warsaw allows me to turn to Pan Marshal with a request to send us help and coordinate our efforts.

I ask Pan Marshal to greet on my behalf and on behalf of the AK soldiers the Soviet army approaching the gates of Warsaw and the Polish units included in it.

From the telegram sent to you on August 6 by Captain Kalugin and on August 8 by Colonel Monter, you know in general terms our position ...

Reinforced by airdrops last night, we continue to fight, but we need further help by airdropping German ammunition and weapons

- about what

I beg you...

The inhabitants of the city are suffering greatly from the shelling of super-heavy artillery, I earnestly ask Pan Marshal to counteract it.

Based on our

capabilities, you cannot expect decisive cooperation from us, because due to the lack of heavy weapons we have

us

small offensive capabilities. However, if you tell us the course of action

and back us up with heavy weapons, we will be able to concentrate all our efforts there in the decisive blow of the Soviet armies on Warsaw.

I ask Pan Marshal to provide data for establishing direct radio communications. I expect

response and

I express my soldierly greetings.

Boer, General of Division.

On September 15, 1944, Bur-Komarovsky sent another telegram to Rokossovsky via London:

"Marshal Rokossovsky. Thank you for the air cover, dropping weapons, ammunition and food. Please keep uploading.

We really need ammunition for heavy machine guns, as well as 9-mm cartridges. Today we are sending liaison officers to Prague."

It is not known whether Rokossovsky read the telegrams of the commander of the Home Army. Most likely, no one gave them to him from Moscow.

On September 15, a member of the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front, K.F. Telegin, reported to the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army on the situation in Warsaw:

"Lieutenant General Shikin is at the apparatus. —
Hello, comrade Shikin. At the Telegin apparatus. - By order of Comrade Shcherbakov, inform on the following issues:

1. What happened and is happening in Warsaw, is there an uprising or is it a hoax. If there is an uprising, how wide are the rebels beaten or not?

2. What was found in Prague, are there many Londoners, do they have strength? 3. How did the Polish division behave in battles? Please provide detailed information on all these issues. - I report:

1. Many data confirm that in Warsaw on August 1, on the orders of Sosnkowski, an uprising of the Home Army was raised, during which the armed detachments of the Army of the People and other political groups, as well as the population of Warsaw, joined it.
We have this data from residents leaving Warsaw, two colonels of the security corps

And

specially sent persons from the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party.

On September 12, a document was delivered from Warsaw from the captain of the Red Army Kalugin from the Chernoy group.
Kalugin confirms the fact of the uprising and the capture by the rebels of the central districts of Warsaw, the district of Zoliborz and Mokotow.

On September 10, two Polish girls crossed the Vistula to our side -

Balcezhok Yanina

Kazimirovna and Yavorskaya Elena Leonovna, who stated the following: that they were sent by the Central

Committee of the Polish Workers' Party to the Polish Committee of National Liberation and to the Command of the

Red Army for information on the state of affairs in Warsaw and to transmit a request for assistance

help. They reported that the uprising had begun | August at 17.00 by detachments of the Home Army without prior agreement

with other political parties, and in particular with the Polish Workers' Party and the People's Army. Ludov's army was also

preparing for an uprising, but the moment of it

wanted to coincide with the approach of the Red Army to Warsaw (this proves that in Moscow they really counted on an

uprising in Warsaw, but they thought that it would be led by the People's Army. - B.S.). However, seeing that after the

action of the Home Army, the uprising spread and began to involve the population, the People's Army also joined it in the course of events.

The parties of different directions existing in the city spontaneously united for an uprising against the Germans.

There has been no agreement between the Home Army and the People's Army since the beginning of the uprising and to this day.

Balcezhok and Yavorskaya were sent by the Central Committee of the PRI without the knowledge of the command of the Home Army. The latter, according to their statement, would not have agreed to their sending.

At the beginning of the uprising, the rebels were successful and captured the central part of the city, but after the Germans threw

large forces against them, the rebels were forced to leave a significant part of the territory occupied by them.

During the first

week of the uprising, mobilization was carried out in the city, but there was nothing to arm the mobilized.

The armed forces of the rebels at first numbered - in the Home Army up to 7 thousand, in the People's Army - 4 thousand people.

On the 3rd, 5th and 17th of August, British planes dropped weapons, ammunition and food to the insurgents, but

in extremely small quantities. After that the English

the planes didn't show up.

The London government appointed the commander of the Home Army as the leader of the uprising -

Bura, the operational leader of the uprising is Bura's deputy, Colonel nicknamed - "Monter".

The rebels hope that only the Red Army will liberate Warsaw from the Germans. According to them, all members of the People's Army, as well as the rank and file and junior commanders of the Home Army, recognize the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The senior officers of the Home Army are hostile to him. They also stated that the authority of the London government in exile and Boer had fallen sharply, the participants in the uprising were becoming more and more convinced of their treacherous role.

The position of the rebels is difficult - there is no food, water, ammunition. Without help from outside
The rebels won't be able to hold out for long.

These girls in the main, of course, truthfully stated the state of affairs in Warsaw. By their
Orientation at this time, the rebels hold the following areas:

1. Zolibozh district, Marimont.
2. Quarters in the city center, adjacent from the north and from the south to the railway station. 3. District Mokotow.
4. District on the west. bank of the river Vistula, south of the southern bridge.

The presence in these areas of pockets held by the insurgents is confirmed by our observation. The enemy daily bombed these areas with aircraft and fired with artillery. At night, machine-gun and rifle fire, explosions and fires are clearly audible. On the night of September 14 and on the night of September 15, we organized the transfer of ammunition, weapons and food to these pockets. A total of 644 U-2 sorties were made, which dropped forty-five tons

food, 329 kg of biscuits, 83 kg of fat, 3125 cigarettes, 6020 hand. grenades with fuses, 295,000 screw cartridges, 497 machine guns, 596,080 TT rounds, 60 50-mm mortars and 7,000 for them min.

The insurgents in these areas laid out the signals indicated to them, dropped in the afternoon with a pennant from

attack aircraft, however, we do not have confirmation by a living person or in any other way of receiving the dropped cargo. This morning, 22 armed insurgents swam across to us from the Warsaw area from the southern bridge, who reported that yesterday the enemy had

launched an attack on this area and pushed the rebels back from the banks of the Vistula, thus

Thus, they lost
the possibility of direct communication with us.

In all these areas held by the insurgents, according to the data of the persons arriving to us, the total number of the
insurgents and those who help them is 40-50 thousand, but the armed ones are 15 thousand, which roughly split in
half into the
Army of the People and the Home Army.

The data needs to be verified. On the question of Warsaw, there is nothing more to report now.

Can.

— Comrade Telegin! Is it known who leads the rebels from the People's Army? Please, if you have nothing more about
Warsaw,
report on the second question.

“Who heads the Army of Ludov, I don't have data, I'll find out and report back later. On the second question, no
armed
detachments of the Home Army were found in Prague. In the area of the town of Rembertow, we found one
battalion of
"Akovtsy". This battalion is disarmed, we seized from them: | heavy machine gun, 2 light machine guns, 2 anti-tank rifles,
more than
100 grenades,
vending machines and
rifles. The battalion did not offer resistance, no other political organizations, including the Polish Workers'
Party in Prague, have also
been established yet.

The population of Prague, according to a rough estimate, is 25-30 thousand people. The population met the Red
Army and parts of
the Polish Army with exceptional enthusiasm, actively helped to carry the wounded from the battlefield and provided
them with
first aid, and on their own initiative picked up the dead soldiers

And
officers under shelling and buried them, covering the graves with flowers and renewing them daily
flowers.

The people are in dire need of food. The last one or two months have been severely starving. We have taken
measures to provide
the population with food.

On the second question, I have everything. What else interests you on this subject? — Are there many
Londoners in Prague and what is their influence on the population?

- Londoners have not yet been found in Prague and their influence is imperceptible, it is possible that we
How
should not understand this issue.

— Comrade Telegin! I did not understand who the "Akovtsy" from the battalion, which you once or? >) s

- I answer. "Akovtsy" is the abbreviated name of the Home Army. Third question. The first Polish division of the Berling army under the command of Colonel Bevzyuk participated in the battles for Prague.

- Clear. I ask you to give an answer to the third question - how did the Polish division behave in battles?

- From the beginning of the offensive until the last moment, the soldiers and officers of this division fought well, adequately fulfilling the task assigned to them.

— Comrade Telegin! What were the negative facts of the behavior of soldiers and officers during the battle of the Polish division?

- Even before the end of the artillery preparation on September 10, at the initiative of the grassroots officers and soldiers, individual units rose and went on the attack right after the artillery fire. Despite the difficult conditions of the battle (in the forest and settlements), the officers and sub-officers for the most part performed the task skillfully. Everyone had a desire to be the first to enter Prague and basically this desire was realized. Neither the commander of the 125th sk, nor the Military Council of the 47th Army, nor the Military Council of the Front make any significant claims against this division. We believe that they fought bravely, persistently and skillfully.

On the first day of the offensive, prisoners were captured - Austrian, Silesian and Poznań

Poles. The soldiers of the first division immediately on the battlefield beat them thoroughly because they were Poles, but fought along with the Germans, and when the prisoners declared that they were forcibly mobilized, they them answered that if you were Poles, you would not have remained with the Germans, but would have long gone over to the side of the Lublin government.

The mood of the personnel of the division is combative and cheerful, they declare their desire to be the first to break into Warsaw at all costs, we are thinking of satisfying this desire. All".

Representatives of the Human Army greatly exaggerated their role in the uprising. In fact, the number of AL fighters was many times inferior to the number of AK fighters, and the Army units

the men

were forced to obey Bur-Komarovsky. Earlier reports by the Communists, which greatly exaggerated the power and influence of the Human Army, led the Headquarters to the erroneous conclusion that the uprising in Warsaw could be led by the Communists.

By the nature of Shikin's questions, it is felt that he needed some kind of "compromising evidence" on the actions of the

Poles from the 1st Polish Army. Probably, already at that moment, Stalin decided to replace Berling as commander of the army, which was soon carried out not without the participation of Rokossovsky.

The offensive of the Soviet 47th Army on September 16 was not successful, primarily due to the lack of

ammunition. The Soviet troops did not support the courageous attempt of the Polish units under the command of

General Berling to cross the Vistula in close proximity to Warsaw. On September 16-19, up to six infantry battalions

crossed the Vistula; On September 23, under the onslaught of superior enemy forces, the Poles, having suffered heavy

losses, were forced to return to the eastern coast.

S. M. Shtemenko claims:

"The situation forced us to make serious amendments to the previously developed plan for the attack on Warsaw by the

forces of the 1st Polish Army. It was necessary to look for other ways to defeat the enemy in the Polish capital,

about which we reported to the Supreme Commander.

— What does the General Staff offer? he asked after a short pause.

Antonov said that nothing else could be offered but to repeat the attacks of the 47th and 70th armies to bypass Warsaw

from the north and northwest, as well as to strengthen the 1st Polish army.

The Supreme Commander demanded data on the forces of the 47th and 70th armies. I reported. When he became convinced

that the composition of the armies was weak, and the troops were exhausted from fatigue and losses, since since July 18 they

had been continuously fighting heavy battles, while the enemy's defenses were strong everywhere, there was a long

silence in the office. The Supreme Commander walked slowly along the table with

extinguished pipe in hand. Finally, turning to us, he said:

- Tell Comrade Zhukov that he and Rokossovsky think about how to help

Warsaw... Is it still possible to liquidate the enemy's foothold in the interfluvial area and organize an offensive bypassing Warsaw with the forces of the armies of Gusev and Popov? Let them also think about what can be done in the city near Berling. Is it possible to urgently send him reinforcements with experience in fighting in cities? ..

The order was transmitted, and a day later, on September 20, Zhukov and Rokossovsky sent their considerations to the General Staff. Neither the representative of the Headquarters, nor the commander of the 1st Belorussian Front had any doubts that the struggle to defeat the enemy in the Warsaw area should be continued.

A. I. Antonov, as well as the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, agreed with the considerations of G. K. Zhukov and K. K. Rokossovsky. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief also agreed with them. He ordered to hurry the front with the preparation of the operation and to closely monitor the situation. on bridgehead of the 1st Polish Army.

These days, JV Stalin, the General Staff and the Main Political Directorate from beyond the Vistula received data that testified to the incredible: the High Command of the Home Army was implicitly undermining the forces of the rebels from within. On September 20, seven officers from the headquarters of the commander of the Warsaw District of the Home Army Monter arrived in Prague - they were instructed to contact

command of the Red Army and the Polish Army. One of these officers stated that General Boer had given a secret order to coerce by force the armed detachments oriented on

Lublin government, obey only its own orders and crack down on those who do not obey.

In fact, no help was provided to Berling's army in the bridgehead across the Vistula. A

allegations that the "Akovites" were cracking down on members of the communist detachments were probably one of the pretexts for allowing the Germans to complete the destruction of the rebels.

On September 21, the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front reported to Stalin on the situation in Warsaw:

"According to many sources, mainly interviews with people leaving Warsaw and agents abandoned by us, it has been established that the total number of armed insurgents,

continuing the fight against the Germans in the city, does not exceed 4,000 people, acting in isolation in three areas (in fact, about 20 thousand soldiers of the Home Army were captured by the Germans in the last days of the fighting, so the number of rebels who resist seems to be underestimated. - B. WITH.).

Formally, the general leadership is carried out by General "Monter", whose headquarters is located
v
the central region, but in essence each region lives and acts independently, and within the regions - detachments of the Home Army, the Army of the People, the Polish Army of the People, the security corps have not lost their political and organizational independence and are striving to maintain independence.

The insurgents have light weapons, consisting of pistols, carbines, rifles, machine guns, a small number of light machine guns, mostly German, no guns, medium and heavy mortars, with a very poor supply of ammunition.

Given the number of insurgents, their extremely weak weapons, isolation in separate pockets, as well as the lack of a unified military leadership and political unity, the insurgents do not represent any real force in the struggle for Warsaw and one cannot count on their any significant help.

In the city and in the districts occupied by the insurgents, there is still a significant number of people who can, to one degree or another, take part in the fight against the Germans, but they are not organized and armed and are suffering from an acute shortage of food, which is why they can be expected to be drawn into active fighting at this time is not possible.

According to the testimonies of a number of people who left Warsaw, it is known that in August the rebels still received weapons, ammunition, food and medicines dropped by British aircraft, however, according to the general statement of the interrogated, most of the goods fell into the hands of the Germans, due to their dropping from a great height. An example of this is the dropping of cargo by a hundred American "Flying Fortress" aircraft on September 18, 1944 from a height of 4.5 thousand meters.

Of the 230 loaded parachutes observed from our shore, the vast majority landed not in the areas occupied by the rebels, but in the location of the Germans, and some - in the location

of our troops, 40 km from Warsaw.

Thus, instead of helping the rebels, the Allies supply the Germans.

The overwhelming majority of our droppings of cargo by PO-2 aircraft hit their intended purpose, which is confirmed by everyone who left Warsaw and our agents.

We continue further assistance to the rebels with weapons, ammunition, food and medicine.

Rokossovsky Telegin.

This report was supposed to reassure Stalin: the Home Army in Warsaw is currently moment does not represent a significant force, and after the occupation of the city, it can be ignored. But time for

the occupation of the Polish capital was already lost, and the forces of the 1st Belorussian Front were exhausted in fruitless attacks. But Stalin did not send reinforcements.

On September 22, the representative of the General Staff at the Polish Committee of National Liberation, General Molotkov, reported to Zhukov:

“During the night and day of September 21, 1944, the situation on the front of the units of the 1st Polish Army deteriorated sharply.

At dawn on September 21, 1944, the enemy, with the support of a strong art. preparation and smoke release attacked units of the Polish army on the western bank of the river. Wisla. As a result, stopped any connection with 2/6 sh (2nd battalion of the 6th Polish infantry regiment. - B.S.), which from 08.30 called strong art. fire on yourself. All connection with the battle of the 8th paragraph has ceased.

From our shore during the day, separate groups of Polish soldiers were observed near the western bank of the tip of the southern bridge across the river. Wisla. A group consisting of two battalions of the 9th Infantry Division, as a result of a strong enemy counterattack, was pushed back and by 15.00 on September 21, 1944 occupied a small eastern part of quarter 7 (radio report).

With a company of the 7th point in the area of elev. 78.0 no connection. A company of the 1st infantry division under the influence of a strong art. enemy fire - went to the eastern bank of the river. Wisla.

The army commander decided during the night of September 22, 1944 to find out the situation of the units on the western bank of the river. Wisla.

From a study of the ongoing operation of the 1st Polish Army to force the river. Vistula and the capture of the city of Warsaw, I report to your decision the conclusion:

1. The troops of the 1st Polish Army have not yet learned how to cross a large water barrier, especially since they have no experience in urban combat.

2. In order to capture the city of Warsaw under these conditions, it is necessary at least to reach the forts of the western fortified Warsaw semicircle, which is 30 km. A minimum of two divisions will be required for a 30 km front, in addition, 6-7 divisions will be required to fight for the city of Warsaw. In total, at least eight to nine divisions are needed. At that time in the 1st Polish Army

available

three fired (1,2, 3rd infantry divisions), not fired - one 4th infantry division and one cavalry brigade. Only four infantry divisions and one cavalry. brigade, four or five divisions are missing.

With these forces and little experience, the 1st PA will not be able to take the city of Warsaw.

3. The limited number of shells does not allow to solve the attack in the forehead of the city of Warsaw with the crossing of a large water line of the river. Wisla.

General conclusion:

If we do not mean now a sufficient increase in the forces and means of the 1st PA, then desirable

temporarily postpone the Warsaw operation, moving to a strong defense along the eastern bank of the river. Wisla.

I am reporting to you:

The representative of the GShKA Molotov.

This report retained the resolution: "T. Molotov. Berling ordered 22.9 begin

pulling all units from the western bank to the eastern one, where to go on the defensive.

Zhukov".

By the way, the fact that the Poles are poorly trained in forcing rivers and fighting in urban conditions has been repeatedly heard before. However, for some reason it did not occur to Rokossovsky to reinforce

1st Polish Army with more experienced Soviet units. Probably, the Polish landing was only to demonstrate to the Western allies the impossibility of capturing Warsaw at the moment.

It can also be assumed that Stalin had an idea that Warsaw would certainly be liberated by the 1st Army of the Polish Army. However, rather, the idea was required only to justify the failure to take Warsaw and the lack of support for the Poles from the Soviet troops. Now

same guilt for

the failure of the landing, for the support of which not enough shells were even allocated, assigned

to the command of the Polish army. There was a pretext for removing Beurling. And at the same time appeared

a reason to demonstrate to the Western allies the "objective difficulties" of capturing Warsaw.

On September 23, Stalin had a conversation with the ambassadors of England and the United States. According to the Soviet record,

"Harriman asks what is the situation in the Warsaw area. Does Marshal Stalin think What operations there are developing satisfactorily?

Stalin replies that he considers the situation in the Warsaw region to be unsatisfactory. The fact is that the Vistula is a serious obstacle. In order to take Warsaw by a frontal attack, it is necessary to transport heavy tanks and heavy artillery to the other side of the Vistula,

what very

difficult to do in the current environment. Therefore, Warsaw will need to be taken by roundabout movement.

Kerr asks if there is any information about the situation of the rebels in Warsaw.

Stalin replies that the rebels in Warsaw are scattered over four districts. Among rebels

there are about 2.5 thousand armed people. To help the rebels on the other side of the Vistula

four battalions from Beurling's army were transferred, but they suffered such heavy losses that they would have to be called back.

In addition, to help the rebels, the Soviet command dumped food, medicines and weapons. At the same time, Stalin

notes that weapons dropped from American aircraft often do not fall into the hands of the rebels, since they are dropped from very high altitudes.

Stalin says that when the Soviet troops occupied Prague, they, talking with the inhabitants, asked them why they rebelled, not

knowing whether the Red Army command would support them. The inhabitants of Prague replied that the uprising started

too early because, when the Soviet troops approached Warsaw, the Germans announced that they would withdraw the entire male

population from Warsaw. Indeed, the Germans began to hunt for the male population, even with dogs.

Now the insurgents

in Warsaw have been dispersed by German troops and many of them are hiding in underground drainpipes, fearful of

the Germans. The population of Warsaw is starving. In general, the uprising in Warsaw created great difficulties for the

Red Army, since, in view of the fact that the rebels are in various parts of Warsaw, Soviet artillery is deprived of the opportunity

to act against the city (in fact,

like us

remember, the Soviet artillery at that moment simply did not have ammunition. - B.S.).

Kerr says that General Boer tried to establish communication with the Soviet command over an underground telephone cable.

Stalin replies that General Boer has not been found at all. He, apparently, is outside Warsaw and commands only his

radio station. As for contacting him via the underground telephone cable, there is no need for this, since contact can be made

by radio. Soviet troops maintain contact with the insurgents, learn from them whether cargo dropped from aircraft has reached

them, etc. This kind of contact is maintained both by radio and by sending people by the insurgents and receiving their

representatives from the insurgents.

On September 23, Bur-Komarovsky reported to London: "Today, communication has been established with the radio station

of Marshal Rokossovsky. Last night received further Soviet drops of ammunition and food. There is a Soviet-German artillery

duel with the superiority of Soviet fire.

The fact that even in the face of a shortage of shells, Soviet artillery had superiority over the German

in the Warsaw area, proves that the Germans were not so concentrated here

significant

artillery force. Yes, and there was probably no excess of shells.

In the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Polish government in exile in the event of the entry of the Red Army into

Warsaw, issued on September 23, 1944, in particular, it was said:

"In the event that Warsaw is occupied by Soviet troops in the coming days and before a Polish-Soviet political agreement is

reached, the government bodies and the AK in Warsaw may find themselves unprotected by the Polish-Soviet treaty in relation

to the Soviets. At the same time, their moral and political position in the world and among the allies is unusually strong, which can

serve to some extent to preserve them from liquidation and put them in the position of a side with which the Soviets will have to

reckon. There is no possibility of going underground or leaving Warsaw. This can only be done by individuals. All that remains is an

explicit performance as hosts with

using the moral-political position achieved at the cost of such selflessness and such sacrifices.

This was the reason why the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front did not take Warsaw in September 1944, waiting until the

Home Army and other rebels who had joined them in Warsaw would be forced to surrender to the Germans. The participants in the

Warsaw Uprising by that time had a solid authority in the world, including in public opinion in England and the USA.

Therefore, it was impossible to liquidate the authorities created by the rebels without much noise.

And

disarm the Warsaw detachments of the Home Army. And the legalization of the formations of the London government threatened the emergence of an extremely dangerous dual power for the Soviet side in Poland, moreover, in conditions when

the majority of Poles sympathized with the Polish government in exile, located in London, and the Home Army, and not the puppet

Polish National Liberation Committee. Here one could not even fully rely on the loyalty of the PKNO fighters of the pro-

Soviet 1st Army of the Polish Army. It is no coincidence that the rebels were joined by soldiers from the army of Berling, who crossed the Vistula. And Berling, in turn, without checking for political reliability, accepted into the ranks of his army former

members

The regional army, which was one of the main reasons for his dismissal from the post of army commander.

On September 24, 1944, the commander of the Warsaw Corps, General Monter (Brigade General Anthony

Khrushchel), reported to London:

"The Soviet officer I reported on reported that he received instructions from the headquarters of Marshal Rokossovsky. He conveyed the following questions:

1. What are our needs.
2. How do we see the Soviet actions in Warsaw and our interaction with them. Targets for Soviet artillery in the location of the city.

Monter transmitted a radiogram to Marshal Rokossovsky, in which he stated promptly tactical details of the plan for the capture of Warsaw by the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front in cooperation with rebels."

The officer, it seems, never made it to Rokossovsky's headquarters. And no one was going to interact with the rebels.

On September 27, the headquarters of the 1st Belorussian Front, in a report to the General Staff, summed up the disappointing results of the landing of the 1st Polish Army: out of 2614 people who crossed to the eastern coast, 627 people returned, including 289 wounded. Some of the missing according to indications returned, made their way to the detachments of the Home Army in various parts of the city.

The failure of the landing became one of the pretexts for the release of 3. Berling from the command of the 1st Polish Army. September 26, 1944 in the name of G.K. Zhukov received a report from a representative

of the General Staff of the Red Army, Major General Sviridov with proposals for candidates for the position of Deputy Berling. This document contains a resolution

"T. Semenov (that is, Stalin. - B.S.). Studying Beurling, I came to the conclusion that he could not command an army. It would have been better if he had been appointed deputy Rol Zhymersky (commander of the armed forces of the PKNO. - B.S.), and instead of Berling, commander appoint Major General Perkhovich, who now commands the 3rd Guards. sk. 28th

A. G. Zhukov.
September 27, 1944.

Stalin, however, did not prefer Franz Iosifovich Perkhovich, a Belarusian, with a surname that, if desired, could be considered Polish. On September 30, at the suggestion of Zhukov and Rokossovsky, Berling was replaced by Major General V.V. Korchits, who was considered much more politically reliable. Zygmunt Berling was still an officer in pre-war Poland and in

The pro-Soviet Polish Army came from the Katyn camp, since it was recognized by Beria as "correctly politically minded." And Vladislav Vikentievich Korchits was an officer in the tsarist army, who volunteered for service in the Red Army in 1919, fought on the Soviet side in the Soviet-Polish war, and before the Great Patriotic War commanded the 182nd Infantry Division. After the war, he was Chief of the General Staff and the first

deputy

Minister of National Defense of Poland, that is, Rokossovsky. Korchits, a native of the Belarusian Slonim, was the same "Russian Pole" as Rokossovsky, but quite trustworthy. Berling, on the other hand, was suspected of at least not disarming the AK units and arresting their commanders. Berling, like some other members of the PKNO, wanted to be not a Soviet puppet, but an ally, but Stalin needed puppets in Poland.

Zygmunt Berling considered Rokossovsky one of the culprits for his removal from the post of commander of the 1st Polish Army. After all, Konstantin Konstantinovich signed a representation of his replacement Korchits. And Berling will take revenge on Rokossovsky in the mid-1950s, which we will learn about later.

The justification for the replacement of Berling is the entry in the combat log of the 1st Belorussian Front for September about the Warsaw landing of the 1st Polish Army:

"The actions of the units of the 2nd and 3rd PD of the 1st PA to seize bridgeheads on the western bank of the river. The Vistula, launched on September 16, 1944, were unsuccessful. The units that crossed over fought heavy battles for 6 days, repelling continuous counterattacks of the enemy, whose forces were growing every day. During the fighting, the enemy managed to dismember the crossing units and deprive them of mutual support. As a result, the units that crossed the river. Vistula, September 22, 1944 were evacuated to the eastern bank of the river. Vistula in the Prague region.

The main reasons for the failure of the actions of the 2nd and 3rd PD to force the river. Vistula and the capture of bridgeheads in Warsaw are:

- The isolation of the centers of the uprising within the city, the lack of coordination between them

and their complete passivity, which allowed the enemy to freely maneuver and
fully

use their forces to act against units and units of the 3rd PD. Right after

forcing the river. In the Vistula, the advance detachments of the 3rd Infantry Division removed most of their forces

operating against other groups of insurgents and transferred them to the area of operations of the eastern
group - in

order to localize the success of the advance detachments of the 3rd Infantry Division and prevent them
from joining with
the rebels and moving into the center towns in the direction of Mokotów.

- Very slow pace and poor organization of forcing. The success achieved by the advance detachment on
September

16, 1944 was not developed by the main forces of the 3rd Infantry Division and their crossing over the river. The Vistula
dragged

on for 2-3 days. The slow crossing of small units in various sectors led to the lack of mutual support for the
crossing groups. Weak

forward detachments, which had almost no artillery with them, could not independently hold the captured quarters
and,

moreover, successfully fight the counter-attacking enemy, who,

increasing his forces much faster, he transferred them from other parts of the city, where the actions of the rebels were
passive at that
time.

- Parts and subunits of the 3rd Infantry Division did not have sufficient training for street fighting in a large city. On
the very

first day after the crossing, small groups of infantry
become

take cover in basements and conduct a defensive battle. Fire support for such groups from the eastern

banks of the river The Vistula was extremely difficult.

In addition, the course of the battles was affected by the weak organization of control of the crossing units by
the headquarters of the 3rd Infantry Division, commanders of regiments and battalions.

The same magazine indicated that in September the front troops destroyed 7119 enemy soldiers and officers, 276
tanks and self-
propelled guns, 883 guns and mortars, 2248 machine guns, 596

vehicles and tractors and captured 1689 enemy soldiers and officers. Losses
1st

The Belorussian Front for September 1944 amounted to 57,408, including 8,774 killed and 30,807
wounded. Compared

with August, the level of losses of the 1st Belorussian Front has decreased by about half, and the
activity of its

armies has decreased in approximately the same proportion. At the same time, curiously, the irretrievable
losses of

the front almost did not decrease. In August they
were

26,458 people, and in September 19,601. At the same time, the number of wounded decreased in September by 2.5 times. This may indicate a much greater underestimation of the irretrievable losses of the 1st Belorussian Front in August compared to September.

German irretrievable losses by the command of the 1st Belorussian Front in September, most likely, as in August, were exaggerated, but not so significantly. Compared to August, in September they decreased by as much as 13.5 times. It is possible that the General Staff and Headquarters pointed out the absolute unreality of the August numbers of German losses, and this time Rokossovsky's headquarters gave a figure closer to the real losses of the Wehrmacht. It is also possible that this time Moscow received instructions to show that the enemy is still strong and therefore it is not possible at the moment to take Warsaw. And, perhaps, Rokossovsky himself, showing more or less close to reality losses of his own and

enemy troops, tried to convince the General Staff that it makes no sense to continue the attack on Warsaw now.

On October 2, the day the rebels surrendered in Warsaw, the military council of the 1st Belorussian Front reported to the Headquarters on assistance to the uprising: "In order to assist the Warsaw insurgents in the period from 13.09 to 1.10.

including: on

dropping cargo - 2435, to suppress enemy air defense systems in the city of Warsaw in the area of dropping cargo - 100, to bombard and attack enemy troops in the city of Warsaw at the request of the insurgents - 1361, to cover areas occupied by the insurgents, and to reconnoiter the enemy in the interests of the insurgents - 925.

During the same period, frontal aviation dropped to the insurgents in the city of Warsaw: 45-mm guns - 1, machine guns - 1478, 50-mm mortars - 156, anti-tank rifles - 505, Russian rifles - 170, German rifles - 350, carbines - 669, shells 45 mm - 300, min 50 mm - 37 216, rifle cartridges - 1 312 600, TT cartridges - 1 360 984, PTR cartridges - 57 640, 7.7 mm cartridges - 75 000, Mauser cartridges - 260 600, parabellum cartridges - 312,760, hand grenades - 18,428, German hand grenades - 18,270, medicines - 515 kg, telephone sets - 10, telephone switches - 1, telephone elements - 10, Bass-80 batteries - 22, telephone cable - 9600 m, food of various kinds - 131,221 kilograms.

In addition, the artillery of the 1st Polish Army fired to suppress fire weapons.

and

manpower of the enemy in the interests of the rebels, and the anti-aircraft artillery of the 1st PA and the 24th anti-aircraft artillery division of the RGK

covered the rebel areas from enemy air raids with their fire.

To assist the rebels of the Zholibozhsky region in their evacuation to the eastern bank of the river. Vistula 1.10.44 to the western bank of the river. Vistula

was served up to 100 boats and prepared

appropriate fire support for evacuation. Due to the fact that a small number of rebels arrived in the designated area, only 27 people were transported to the east coast.

The same reasons for the failure of the landing in a report to Rokossovsky in a report dated September 25 were also stated by Berling, who also indicated that by the

end of September 19 the enemy had been brought into battle

from the composition

reserves of the 608th security regiment, the 475th anti-tank battalion, a battle group, as well as 50 tanks and self-propelled guns. At the same time, the enemy

concentrated a large number of artillery and mortars in the southwestern part of Warsaw. If at the beginning of the operation

noted

the operation of only about 12 artillery batteries, then by September 20 it was established that there were

southwestern quarters of the city up to 40 artillery batteries and mortar groups.

As noted in the report, "our infantry fought selflessly," but "due to the lack of regimental and divisional artillery, it was not able to withstand superior

forces

infantry, heavy tanks and enemy self-propelled guns. Beurling could not directly write that the main reason was the lack of support from the Soviet formations,

not yet knowing that they were going to make a "scapegoat" out of him for failing to take Warsaw.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the uprising continued to hope for the help of the Red Army, although these hopes were weakening every day. On September 29, Bur-

Komarovsky reported to London:

"1. We clarified that the hungry norm of food is enough for only 3 days. There is no chance that the Red Army will be able to occupy Warsaw during

this time or provide such protection from bombardments and the delivery of food that it would be possible to wait for the city to be occupied.

2. I informed Marshal Rokossovsky about the situation and asked for help. However, if I do not receive it on a large scale and immediately, I will be forced to capitulate on the terms of circulation.

with us

as with combatants, which the Germans guarantee ...

5. In the event of an offensive by the Red Army in the coming days, the evacuation will stop and then I will resume hostilities.

On October 2, the AK commander sent the last report: "October 2, 1944, an agreement was signed

on the cessation of hostilities in Warsaw. At 20.00 on October 2, the German Polish

military operations in the capital. Exit of detachments from Warsaw with weapons as combatants in order to lay down their arms outside the walls of

the city: one regiment on October 4 at 8.00, the rest of the units during the day on October 5. The civilian population is provided with care as far as possible."

It looked like a mockery that the Americans received permission to conduct shuttle

of operations to help Warsaw using the airfield in Poltava | October, on the day when the rebels actually agreed to surrender.

In battles with much better armed units of the Wehrmacht and the SS, about 16 thousand soldiers of the Home Army were killed, and as a result of brutal shelling and bombing of the Polish capital, tens of thousands of Warsaw citizens (according to some estimates, from 40 to 200 thousand). About 20 thousand rebels were captured. The Germans lost 7-8 thousand soldiers and officers killed, another 9 thousand were wounded and 2 thousand were captured by the rebels. More than 200 German tanks were destroyed and damaged.

assault guns. Sometimes they talk about 200 thousand dead residents of Warsaw, but this figure is clearly exaggerated. The last issue of the Insurgents'

Newsletter, published on October 4, the first of two days of surrender, stated: "The fight is over. More than two months of one of the most sublime

and tragic pages of our history has come to an end... The account of our losses and gains, merits and mistakes, sacrifices and values won, we must pass on to

history... A defeat, the extent of which we do not want to underestimate, is a defeat one city, one stage of our struggle for freedom ... It is not a defeat

our

people, our plans and historical ideals.

Under the surrender agreement, the Germans promised that the inhabitants of Warsaw would not be subject to the principle of "collective responsibility" for the uprising. This clause of the agreement was immediately

violated. After the suppression of the uprising, on the orders of Hitler, the Germans almost completely razed Warsaw to the ground. 50 thousand inhabitants were deported to concentration camps, and 150 thousand to forced labor in Germany. SS Obergruppenführer Erich von der Bach, who led the massacre of the townspeople, was later tried three times for these and other crimes and was eventually sentenced to life imprisonment.

Neither in August nor in September 1944, Rokossovsky was at Stalin's reception. During these months, Joseph Vissarionovich generally received the front commanders rather sparingly. On August 1 and 2, he was visited by the commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian fronts R. Ya. Malinovsky and F. I. Tolbukhin, who undoubtedly discussed the final plan for the Iasi-Kishinev operation, and who oversaw this operation as a representative of Headquarters C K. Timoshenko. This circumstance, by the way, proves that the plan and timing of this operation were developed without taking into account the Warsaw Uprising. After all, at that moment in Moscow they did not yet know about the uprising. Then, on September 27, at a

reception at Stalin's, was the commander of the 3rd Belorussian Front, I. D. Chernyakhovsky. Perhaps they discussed with him a plan for a future invasion of East Prussia. At that time, Stalin did not call Rokossovsky to himself. Perhaps Iosif Vissarionovich felt a little out of his element because he forced Rokossovsky to continue attacks on Warsaw, dooming them to failure in advance, but not being able to tell him directly about the political reasons that

did not allow
take Warsaw at the moment.

Konstantin Konstantinovich got to an appointment with Stalin only on November 7, 1944 together

with Zhukov, Vasilevsky, Konev, Antonov and Shtemenko. On this day, the question of casting the commanders of the fronts was decided. A few days later, on November 12, by order of the Headquarters, Rokossovsky was appointed commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front instead of G.F. Zakharov, Zhukov took over the 1st Belorussian Front. These two fronts, together with the 1st Ukrainian Front, were to carry out the Vistula-Oder operation in January 1945, liberate Poland and advance on Berlin. At the same time, Rokossovsky was deprived of the laurels of the liberator of Warsaw, although before the Warsaw Uprising they were directly predicted for him. But now the circumstances have changed. It was assumed that the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, in the event of a successful development of events, after the occupation of Warsaw, would immediately move to Berlin. And according to Stalin's plan, Berlin was to be taken by a front under the command of the first person in the military hierarchy, that is, Zhukov, Deputy Supreme

commander in chief.

Rokossovsky, as a Pole, was not at all suitable for the capture of Berlin - Stalin did not want to give his compatriots another reason

for national pride. Rokossovsky, of course, was disappointed that he was removed from the front, aimed at Warsaw and Berlin, but he had to obey. At the same time, representatives of the Headquarters on the fronts were abolished, which Rokossovsky

had long sought. This was motivated by a significant reduction in the total length of the Soviet-German front. Now Stalin himself

was going to coordinate from Moscow the actions of the fronts in the Berlin direction.

The new appointment was preceded by dramatic events associated with the unsuccessful offensive of the northern wing of

the 1st Belorussian Front. In unpublished drafts of his memoirs, Rokossovsky described the events that followed the

suppression of the Warsaw Uprising as follows:

“With the cessation of fighting in Warsaw between the rebels and the Nazi troops, active hostilities ceased directly near Warsaw. The enemy went on the defensive on the entire front. But we were not allowed to go on the defensive in the

sector north of Warsaw, in the Modlin direction, by Marshal Zhukov G.K., a representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme

High Command, who was with us at that time.

I have already mentioned that in this direction the enemy held a small area of terrain on the eastern banks of the Vistula and

Narew rivers, its top resting on the confluence of these rivers and flowed around on one side by the Vistula, and on the other by

the Narew River. This area formed a triangle located in a lowland, which could only be attacked from its wide part, that is, in

the forehead. The banks of the mentioned rivers, bordering this ill-fated section,

strongly

towered over the terrain that our troops had to storm, and with these

on the high banks, the enemy perfectly looked through everything that was happening on the approaches to the positions defended

by his troops. The strongest side of his defense was that all approaches

were shot through by cross artillery fire from positions located beyond the Narew and Vistula rivers, and in addition, by artillery

located in the Modlin fortress at the confluence of these rivers, that is, at the top of the triangle of this area.

I have already mentioned the fruitless attacks of the troops of the 70th and 47th armies. Troops carried

heavy losses, a large amount of ammunition was expended, and we could not knock the enemy out of this triangle.

My repeated reports to Zhukov about the inexpediency of this offensive and the proof that even if the enemy leaves this triangle, we will not occupy it anyway, since he will shoot us with his fire from very advantageous positions, had no effect. From

me received one answer that he could not leave for Moscow with the knowledge that the enemy was holding a bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Vistula and Narew.

In order to decide to stop this senseless offensive in spite of desire

Headquarters representative, I decided to personally study the situation directly on the ground. After reviewing the evening with the conditions and organization of the offensive, which was supposed to start from

At dawn the next day, with two staff officers, I arrived at the battalion of the 47th Army, which was operating in the first echelon.

Before dawn, we lay down at the starting position for the attack. Artillery preparation assigned

15 minutes, and with the transfer of fire to the second trench of the enemy, the battalion had to rush to the attack. I had a telephone with me and signals were set: attacking - red rockets, attack canceled - green.

At night, the enemy behaved calmly. Neither from his side, nor from our shooting was perfect. One could even feel some disregard for him to some extent.

us, as ours were not particularly quiet. Movement was noticeable in many areas, the noise of cars and carts, sparks from kitchen pipes, apparently, brought food to the positions. Finally, at the appointed time, our artillery, mortars and Katyushas opened fire. I won't describe

the effect of the fire of our means on me, but what I happened to see and experience in

the response to our fire from the enemy cannot be forgotten. In less than 10 minutes from the start of our artillery preparation, the enemy also opened it. His fire was fired at us from three directions: on the right from behind the Narew - oblique, on the left from behind the Vistula - also oblique and in the forehead - from the fortress and forts. It was a real hurricane, guns of various calibers fired, up to

heavy:

serfs, ordinary and six-barreled mortars, called by our soldiers "Vanyushs". For some reason, the enemy did not spare the shells and answered us with such fire as

as if he

wanted to show what he was still capable of. What is the attack. The bodies could not be torn off the ground, they seemed to be stuck, and, of course, I personally had to make

sure that until then,
while this

the artillery system of the enemy will not be suppressed, and there can be no question of liquidating the bridgehead occupied by the enemy.

And now we did

not have the means to suppress this artillery, and the goal was not justified by the means.

Taking all this into account, without waiting for the end of our artillery preparation, I ordered a signal to cancel the attack, and by telephone I told the commanders of the 47th and

70th to stop the offensive. Returning to the observation post of the commander of the 47th General Gusev, he ordered to refrain from

any

offensive actions until my special order, the commander of the 70th Popov V.S. received the same order.

I returned to our front-line command post in a state of great excitement with Zhukov's incomprehensible stubbornness. What exactly did he want to prove

with this inexpedient persistence. After all, if it weren't for him here with us, I would have abandoned this offensive long ago, than I would have saved

many warriors

from death and injury and would save money for the upcoming decisive battles. It was here that I once again finally became convinced that my conviction that this instance -

representatives of the Headquarters - in the form in which they were used, is unnecessary, is correct and with such

I remain an opinion

and now, when I write my memoirs.

My excited state apparently caught the eye of a member of the Military Council of the front, General Bulganin N.A., who asked what had happened, and, having

learned about my decision to stop the offensive, advised me to report this to the Supreme Commander, which I did right here.

Stalin listened to me very attentively. It was noticeable that he paid attention to my

a state of agitation, and from the tone of his conversation with me one could feel his desire to reassure me. Then, asking me to wait a bit, after a short period of time

he told me that he agreed with the proposal, and ordered the offensive to stop, the troops of the front to go on the defensive and begin preparations for a new offensive

operation.

Submit your thoughts on the use of front troops to Headquarters. After
such

conversation, like a mountain fell off my shoulders. We all perked up and set about issuing a directive to the troops. Even before Zhukov's departure, I had to listen to several epithets in his spirit over the phone. Most of all, he took up arms against Gusev, who was not guilty of anything. It was a solid, well-trained commander. Honest and executive, able to take reasonable initiative and defend his conviction if he is right.

This little quarrel with Zhukov as a representative of the Headquarters was the last. Shortly after his departure from us, I learned that the representatives of the Headquarters were generally abolished as an instance. And I involuntarily thought - long ago it would have been so. I learned about this from Stalin himself.

The bridgehead remaining behind the enemy did not bother us at all, it was of no importance to us, apparently, the enemy also appreciated it, because after some time he himself, quite unexpectedly for us, cleared this bridgehead.

Now, in the entire zone, the troops of the front have come close to the banks of the Narew and Vistula rivers and firmly held bridgeheads on the western bank of the Narew in the area of Rozhan and Pultusk and on the western bank of the Vistula in the area of Magnuszew and in the area south of Pulawy. The fighting weakened significantly, and the enemy, apparently, ran out of steam. His attempts to intensify his actions against the troops defending the Magnushevsky bridgehead did not stop, but he stopped all activity on the Narew. This behavior of his made us somewhat alarmed, and we were not mistaken."

N. A. Antipenko described the parting of Rokossovsky with the 1st Belorussian Front and the feelings experienced by his long-term comrades-in-arms as follows:

"For almost three years, K.K. Rokossovsky commanded our front. The name of the front changed (Bryansk, Donskoy, Central, Belorussian, 1st Belorussian), but the leadership, the main personnel of the front, and even some of the armies remained the same. The chief of staff of the front was M. S. Malinin,

commander of artillery - [V. I. Kazakov, commander of armored forces - G. N. Orel, commander of the air army - S. I. Rudenko, head of engineering troops - A. I. Proshlyakov, head of logistics - N. A. Antipenko, head political administration -

S. F. Galadzhiev. This entire team was headed by the unchanged composition of the Military Council of the front -

K. K. Rokossovsky and K. F. Telegin. People worked together, learned to understand each other perfectly. K.K. Rokossovsky was loved by his immediate subordinates, both soldiers and unit officers.

More than once I heard the question: what was the reason for such a universal good relation to Rokossovsky?

I do not pretend to be an impartial biographer and openly admit that I myself am attached to this person, with whom I have been connected by almost three years of joint work at the front and who, with his personal charm, always even and polite address, constant readiness to help in

difficult moment was able to arouse in each subordinate the desire to better perform his order and not let your commander down in anything.

K.K. Rokossovsky, like most major military leaders, built his work on the principle of trust in his assistants. This trust was not blind: it became complete only when

when Konstantin Konstantinovich was personally and more than once convinced that he was being told the truth, that everything possible had been done to solve the problem; convinced of this, he saw in you a good comrade in arms, his friend. That is why the leadership of the front was so united and

soldered: each of us sincerely valued the authority of his commander. Rokossovsky on

the front was not afraid, he was loved. And that is why his instruction was perceived as an order that could not be ignored.

Organizing the execution of Rokossovsky's orders, I least of all resorted to the formula "the commander ordered" in relations with subordinates. There was no need for this. It was enough to say that the commander hoped for the initiative and high organization of the rear. Such was the style of work of both the commander himself and his closest assistants.

Seeing Rokossovsky to the 2nd Belorussian Front, of which he was appointed commander, coincided with Artillery Day - on November 19, 1944, we celebrated this day for the first time. The entire leadership of the headquarters and departments of the 1st Belorussian Front gathered in the city of Byala Podlaska.

On the same day, a rumor spread that, together with Rokossovsky, they were being transferred to the same front.

and all of it

deputies. But G. K. Zhukov, who came to our front, announced that J. V. Stalin had forbidden any kind of translations and everyone should remain in their places. Frankly,

many of us were saddened. I was worried whether the new commander would be as attentive to the work of the rear? Will he take into account the special difficulties in

the work of the rear? After all, the rear is a field in which you can always "burn out" if you do not have the support of the commander. Moreover, they spoke of

Zhukov as a man with a tough character and a tough temper ...

The farewell dialogue between the two marshals, who ascended the makeshift podium on Artillery Day, is well preserved in memory. They remembered their young years when they both fought on the fronts of the civil war, their meetings at exercises, competitions (after all, they are both dashing cavalrymen!) after

the civil war, etc.

All the generals and officers present looked with admiration at their outstanding marshals. "Birthdays", that is, our glorious artillerymen, in whose honor the holiday was arranged, left for their armies and corps in a good mood and thanked the organizers of the holiday.

Starting in June 1944, the situation on the Soviet-German front was significantly influence

provided combat operations by the armies of the Western Allies, who landed on June 6 in Normandy. For the period from June to November 1944

inclusive, the irretrievable losses of the German ground forces amounted to 1237 thousand killed and missing. Of these, 394,000 German soldiers and officers died or went

missing on the Western Front during this period. In addition, here

Can

to attribute about a third of the irretrievable losses of the German ground forces in Italy, which amounted to

the period from May 30, 1943 to November 30, 1944, about 67 thousand people. Third part of it

number was about 22 thousand people. Thus, in total, in the fight against the Western Allies during this period, the German ground forces irretrievably lost about 416

thousand people, which amounted to approximately 33.6 percent of all irretrievable losses incurred in the period from May 30 to 30

November 1944. At the same time, the total number of American and British troops fighting at that time on the Western and Italian fronts was 3.5 times less than the number of the Red Army on the Soviet-German front.

Probably in the last six months of the war, with | December 1944 to May 8, 1945, the share of the Western Allies in the irretrievable losses of the Wehrmacht only increased due to large

German losses during the

Ardennes Offensive in December 1944, where the Germans, according to incomplete data, lost 12,610 killed and 9,154 missing or captured, as well as 317

thousand

prisoners in

Ruhr boiler. We are not talking about the events of the second half of April - early May 1945, when the German troops in droves sought to withdraw to the west in order

to surrender to

captivity

the British and Americans. Thus, in the last months of the war, the British and American armies inflicted at least 40 percent of all irretrievable losses on the German ground forces.

By the way, at the very end of the war, the Allies seriously feared that Stalin might order the Red Army to move further to the West, and developed plans to counter

this, including using German prisoners of war, who were supposed to be given arms again. But, apparently, the fears of Churchill and Truman were in vain. no trace

plans

the Soviet invasion of Western Europe in 1945 has yet to be discovered. Most likely, they did not exist at all. Stalin needed time to make up for the colossal human

losses, restore the destroyed industry using captured technologies and equipment, and strengthen control over the countries of Eastern Europe liberated

from Nazism.

Rokossovsky was probably worried that political circumstances did not give him

possibilities

take Warsaw and defeat the Germans in their native Poland. He was also upset because also on

political considerations, he was transferred to the secondary 2nd Belorussian Front. Now he had to work with a new staff team and prepare an offensive

in West and East Prussia and Pomerania.

Chapter Eleven LAST FIGHTS IN GERMANY

In connection with the transfer to the 2nd Belorussian Front, Rokossovsky was forced to part with Galina Talanova, who in January 1945 became a mother in

the town of Menzshets near Warsaw. called

newborn Hope. Konstantin Konstantinovich gave his daughter his last name. Galina Talanova, together with her little daughter, reached Berlin.

Director of the Svobodinsky Museum "KP of the Central Front" Valentina Vasilievna Ozerova a lot of

once met with Galina Vasilievna, who shared with her the most intimate. Valentine

Vasilievna recalls:

"Galina Vasilievna showed me an album in which there are many photographs of the wartime. On

pictures

they are with Konstantin Konstantinovich side by side, together. Apparently, they wanted to prolong their happiness in this

way. There are also many letters from Rokossovsky. And everything is in verse (it turns out that Konstantin Konstantinovich

I also had a poetic talent. - B.S.). Galina Vasilievna's huge brown eyes shone when she read those poetic messages to me. Those

poems are very, very personal. Destined for her, and only for her - the "unforgettable nightingale", as he called her in a letter from near

Kursk ... Rokossovsky had a deep, serious feeling for Galina. After all, they went through the whole war together ... "

But Konstantin Konstantinovich was not going to destroy his family. "Galina Vasilievna says that she never dreamed of becoming

the wife of a general. I understood that they couldn't be together, "recalled Valentina Ozerova. Rokossovsky immediately warned Galina

Vasilievna: "I can never leave Yulia Petrovna!" And he told how after his arrest in 1937 he spent almost three years in Kresty,

and his wife

did not renounce, although she was oppressed as the wife of an enemy of the people. With Ada, the daughter of an enemy of the

people, at school, the children did not want to sit at the same desk and play in the yard.

Meetings between father and Nadezhda after the war were infrequent. With Galina, they remained good friends. When Rokossovsky

was buried in 1968, his wife Yulia Petrovna stood at the coffin. And in the group of front-line friends - Galina Talanova.

After the war, the marshal constantly helped his former girlfriend and Nadezhda. Then test pilot Yuli Evgenievich Kudryavtsev fell in love with Galina Vasilievna. Rokossovsky, who was very worried that Galina was lonely, blessed their marriage.

In 1959, Konstantin Konstantinovich agreed to the adoption of Nadezhda by Kudryavtsev. Galina and Julius settled in

Latvia, their daughter Marina was born, but soon Kudryavtsev died during the trials. After the death of her husband, Galina returned to

Moscow, worked at the Burdenko Hospital. She didn't marry again.

In August 1988, the former driver of the army commander Sergei Mozhukhin, who dreamed of making friends and relatives of the two branches of the Rokossovskys, on the day of the 45th anniversary of the Battle of Kursk brought

Konstantin, the son of Ada Konstantinovna, and Nadezhda to Svoboda. And the next day Sergei Ivanovich died - his heart

could not stand the joy of the meeting.

In the apartment of Nadezhda Konstantinovna, a huge oil-painted portrait hangs on the wall.

Rokossovsky. "My father wrote letters to my mother in verse," the marshal's daughter said in an interview. "I hardly saw him. I remember well the post-war episode, how we

father chose the sport that I would do. He said, "What can't you do at all? You play a little volleyball. In basketball, too.

You can't swim." Stopped for a swim. Later, I even played for the Latvian national team."

But back to the end of 1944. On November 28, a directive was issued on the preparation by the 1st Belorussian Front of the Warsaw-Poznan operation, during which it was supposed to reach the Piotrków-Zichlin-Lodz line in 11-12 days and develop an offensive on Poznan. On the same day, the 2nd Belorussian was given a directive to conduct the Mławsko-Elbing operation, during which it was supposed to cut off East Prussia from the rest of Germany and provide

assistance to the 1st Belorussian Front in carrying out the Vistula-Oder operation, in particular, through the capture of the Modlin fortress. The directive given to Rokossovsky read:

"Go on the offensive and defeat the enemy's Mława grouping, not later than 10-11 days of the offensive, take control of the Myśliniec, Willenberg, Narydenburg, Dziadowo, Bezhun, Belsk, Plock line and then advance in the general direction to Nowe Miasto, Marienburg. Deliver the main blow from the Rozhany bridgehead with the forces of four combined arms armies, one tank army, one tank and one mechanized corps in the general direction of Pshasnysh, Mława,

Lidzbark. Ensuring the main forces from the north to carry out the offensive of one combined arms army on Myśliniec. The second strike with the forces of two combined arms armies and one tank corps should be delivered from the Serocki bridgehead in the general direction to Naselsk, Belsk. To assist the 1st Belorussian Front in defeating the enemy's Warsaw grouping, the 2nd Belorussian Front should part of its forces strike around Modlin from the west.

In the future, the main forces of the 2nd Belorussian Front were to advance in Pomerania, covering the right flank of the 1st Belorussian Front. On December 22, the plan of the operation of the 2nd Belorussian Front was finally approved by Stalin.

The last time the plans for these operations were discussed in the Kremlin with Stalin on November 27 and 28, 1944. The meeting on November 27, in addition to Rokossovsky, was attended by V. M. Molotov, G. M. Malenkov, L. P. Beria, N. A. Bulganin, G. K. Zhukov, A. I. Antonov, S. M. Shtemenko ,

Deputy People's

Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. G. Dekanozov and Air Force Commander A. A. Novikov. On November 28, in addition to

Rokossovsky, Stalin had Molotov, Bulganin, Zhukov, Antonov, Shtemenko, and Ya. N. Fedorenko, commander-in-chief of the armored and mechanized troops. The fact that I. D. Chernyakhovsky, commander of the 3rd Belorussian

Front, was absent from both meetings proves that it was originally assumed that Rokossovsky's front would interact primarily with Zhukov's front. So

the change in the task of the 2nd Belorussian Front, which, after the start of the operation, was redirected to the elimination of the East Prussian grouping, turned out to be unexpected for Rokossovsky.

The 2nd Belorussian Front included the 50th, 3rd and 48th Armies, the 8th Mechanized and 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps,

and the 4th Air Army. In connection with

change

The 65th and 70th Armies and the 1st and 8th Guards Tank Corps were transferred to the 2nd

Belorussian Front from the 1st Belorussian Front. In addition, Rokossovsky received the 2nd shock, 49th

and 5th guards tank army from the Stavka reserve. In January 1945, the 2nd Belorussian Front consisted

of 881.5 thousand people, 2195 tanks and self-propelled guns, more than 11 thousand guns and mortars and

more than 1500 combat aircraft. He was opposed by eleven infantry and four tank divisions of the 2nd and

9th German armies of Army Group Center, which was renamed Army Group North on January 26,

1945. In addition, the German command had three infantry and one motorized division in reserve. The German

divisions were far from being fully equipped with people and armored vehicles, since the divisions that participated in the Ardennes offensive were replenished first of all. And in reality, the

intelligence of the 2nd Belorussian Front significantly overestimated the opposing German forces. The

9th Army at that moment generally acted against the 1st Belorussian Front, and a number of the

divisions listed in the intelligence report in January 1945 were located on other sectors of the Soviet-German

front. For example, the SS Panzer Divisions Viking and Totenkopf were stationed at that moment in Hungary.

There were also 3

and the 6th Panzer Division, which the scouts of the 2nd Belorussian Front counted before

their

front.

If we equate the number of personnel of three separate tank brigades to

half

rifle division, three URs - to one rifle division, and three cavalry divisions - to one and a half rifle divisions, then

Rokossovsky's forces can be determined at about 72 calculated

divisions,
which were opposed by 15 German divisions. This gave a numerical superiority of 4.8 times, which increased even more due to the low staffing of the German divisions. H. Guderian believed that the Soviet superiority in people on the entire Soviet-German front was: in infantry - 11:1, in tanks - 7:1, in artillery - 20:1, in the number of combat aircraft - 20:1. Probably, these figures were close to reality, especially if only combat units are taken into account. But the advance of Soviet troops in East Prussia was hampered by the presence of powerful long-term fortifications there, created back in the interwar period.

It is no coincidence that the Germans carried out the only strategic offensive operation of the last year of the war against the Anglo-American troops in the Ardennes, and not against the Red Army. The relatively small depth of the Western theater gave at least theoretical chances of achieving decisive success in the course of one operation, while the vast expanses of the Eastern Front did not give such chances even in theory. By the way, another legend is connected with the Ardennes - that at the request of Churchill, Stalin accelerated the offensive of the Red Army in order to save the allies in the Ardennes, and postponed its beginning from January 20 to January 12, 1945, which he informed the British Prime Minister about. It was only in the 1990s that historians' research revealed that Zhukov's plan for the concentration of troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, approved on December 29, 1944, provided for the start of the offensive on January 8, 1945, but due to bad weather, which limited aviation operations, it had to be postponed to more late deadline is 12 January. Churchill's letter to Stalin, which mentioned the Ardennes, contained only a request for information about Soviet military plans, but by no means a request for help. Stalin then simply acted out his readiness to sacrifice the lives of Soviet soldiers for the sake of allied interests, knowing full well that the offensive should begin on January 12th.

As we have already mentioned, the 65th Army was transferred to the 2nd Belorussian Front, which was

under the command of Rokossovsky since the time of the command of the Don Front. P. I. Batov recalled:

"Soon, on the way to his new command post, the marshal stopped by to see us. He was alone. Whole headquarters

front remained near Warsaw. "And I'll go to my troops," said the commander. - We will

comrades, together to finish off the fascists. Half an hour later we saw him off, and in the evening he suddenly

rushed again: "Well, sixty-fifth, feed me dinner, in a new place something and eat like
66

should not have been necessary..." His favorite dish quickly appeared on the table - buckwheat messy porridge."

On January 13, a day after the Vistula-Oder, the East Prussian operation began. The troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front, due to bad weather conditions, were forced to launch an offensive a day later, on January 14, in the first days they advanced slowly, wedged into the German defenses for 5-8 kilometers.

On January 16, Rokossovsky brought tank corps into battle, and on January 17, the 5th Guards Tank Army under the command of V.T. Volsky. In addition, the weather improved in the afternoon of January 16, which allowed for the widespread use of aviation. The advance of the troops of the front accelerated significantly. On January 16, units of the 65th and 2nd shock armies captured Pultusk. On September 17, the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps of General Oslikovsky entered the breakthrough to Allenstein. Rokossovsky recalled: "Our cavalry corps of N. S. Oslikovsky, breaking ahead, flew into Allenstein (Olshtyn), where several echelons with tanks and artillery had just arrived. With a dashing attack (of course, not in cavalry formation!), Having stunned the enemy with the fire of guns and machine guns, the cavalymen captured the echelons. It turns out that the German units moved from the east to close the gap made by our troops. In fact, the echelons were mostly civilian refugees from East Prussia. Those of them who survived had the most terrible memories of meeting Oslikovsky's horsemen. But more on that below.

On January 19, the troops of the 2nd shock army occupied Ciechanow. The 5th Guards Tank Army blocked the Mlavsky fortified area, and the 65th and 70th armies took the Modlin fortress. On January 20, the troops of the 3rd Army crossed the border of East Prussia. And on the same day, the Headquarters ordered to turn 3.48, the 2nd shock and 3rd guards tank armies for operations against the East Prussian group, which was caused by the lagging of the troops of the 3rd Belorussian Front from the planned pace

promotion.

Here is how, in a part of his memoirs, unpublished during his lifetime, Rokossovsky described the tasks of the 2nd Belorussian Front and his attitude to the turn of four armies against Eastern

Prussia:

“Our attention was paid to the speedy advance to the west in order to reliably ensure

from

possible attacks from the north by the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, especially its tank armies. We had no official reports about the events

on the sector of the 3rd Belorussian Front, but there were rumors that the offensive was developing slowly there. And if the large-scale offensive

operations carried out by the Stavka before that, in which several fronts participated at the same time, could be considered a model of skill, then the

organization and leadership of the East Prussian operation raises many doubts. These doubts arose when the Headquarters ordered the 2nd

Belorussian Front on January 20 to turn the 3rd, 48th, 5th Guards. tank and 2nd Shock armies to the north and northeast for operations

against the East Prussian enemy grouping instead of continuing the offensive to the west. After all, then their troops had already broken through the

enemy's defenses and were approaching the Vistula in readiness to force it on the move.

The directive that I received actually radically changed the initial task for the front set by Stalin when I was at Headquarters.

Then not a single

word was mentioned about the involvement of the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front to participate, together with the 3rd

Belorussian Front, in the

liquidation of the East Prussian grouping of enemy troops. And since the main task of the front was an offensive to the west in close

cooperation with the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, the main

a grouping of front troops was created on the left wing of the front (48th, 2nd shock, 65th, 70.49th and 5th guards tank armies). According to the directive received,

the main task was to encircle the East Prussian grouping of the enemy by striking the main forces of the front to the north and northeast with

access to the Frisch-Gaff Bay. At the same time, we did not free ourselves from the previous task - interaction with the 1st Belorussian Front on the

flank - and were forced to continue the offensive to the west, having only two armies on the left wing. From this moment, the stretching of the front began,

since a large

part of our forces advanced to the north and northeast, and a smaller part to the west.

This subsequently led to the fact that, due to the rapid advance to the Oder, the 1st Belorussian Front had to stretch its troops to secure its exposed

flank from the north, since the left wing of our front lagged behind in advancing to the west. And this happened because

our front had to carry out two

different tasks during this period. And the commander of the 1st Belorussian Front, Zhukov, was right when he reproached me for lagging behind the troops

and

default

tasks to secure the flank of his front.

I am sure that at that time he understood the groundlessness of his claim against us and presented it only in order to provoke me. The following questions arose: why did the Headquarters not use very

the advantageous position of the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front and did not combine the blow of the troops of the 3rd Belorussian Front with the blow of our front, inflicting it approximately from the Lomzhinsky direction, from south to north, in the direction of Frisch-Gaff Bay. In this case, this front should immediately be included in

the composition of the troops of the 50th and 3rd armies with their sectors. The General Staff could not help but know that the strongest fortifications in East Prussia were created in its eastern and southeastern parts. In addition, the configuration of the front itself suggested a strike

right from the south

north to cut off East Prussia from Germany. In addition, a strike from this direction was easy to combine with a strike inflicted by the troops of our front. Such a decision would make it easier to break through the enemy front at the very beginning of the operation ...

It was also incomprehensible to me that the reinforcement of the 2nd Belorussian Front by troops from the Stavka reserve at the expense of the 3rd Belorussian Front after the decision of the same Stavka four armies (three

combined arms and one tank) were turned to another direction and were drawn into battle with the East Prussian grouping.

Could it be that even in that situation, the Stavka did not see that the remaining forces of the front execute

can't do the same task? But I personally spoke twice on this issue on HF with Antonov. And the decision of the Headquarters to transfer all four armies in general - the 50th, 3rd, 48th and 5th Guards was completely incomprehensible. tank - to the 3rd Belorussian Front at the most decisive moment, when the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front had to, without delay, overcome such a strong line as the Vistula was in its lower reaches. After the troops of our front reached the sea near Elblag (Elbing) and the Frisch-Gaff Bay, cutting off the enemy's East Prussian grouping, repulsed all attempts by this grouping to break through to the west, it was enough to cover

This

the direction of the 50th and 3rd armies, transferring them to the 3rd Belorussian Front, the 5th Guards. the tank and 48th armies had to be immediately released, leaving them as part of our front to continue operations in the western direction.

The Headquarters again set such a task for us, but did not return the troops, knowing in advance that those forces that remained in the composition of our front, this task cannot be carried out ... "

The 2nd Belorussian Front, advancing to the north, in Pomerania, by order of the Headquarters, was to move significant forces into East Prussia.

Rokossovsky believed that the Stavka's desire to simultaneously have two main directions of attack - on Berlin and Königsberg - only leads to a prolongation of the war. He wrote in his memoirs:

"In my opinion, when East Prussia was completely isolated from the west, it would be possible to postpone the liquidation of the group of Nazi troops surrounded there, and by strengthening the weakened 2nd Belorussian Front, speed up the denouement in the Berlin direction. The fall of Berlin would have happened much earlier. But it turned out that 10 armies at the decisive moment were involved against the East Prussian grouping ... The use of such a mass of troops against the enemy ... remote from the place where the main events were decided, in the situation that had developed in the Berlin direction by that time was clearly inappropriate " .

But Rokossovsky was not obeyed, perhaps delaying the fall of Berlin for two or three months. Politics again influenced the strategy not in the best way.

Initially, Stalin, in all likelihood, assumed, in the event of a successful overcoming of the Vistula line, to immediately seize bridgeheads on the Oder and develop an offensive against Berlin, taking advantage of the fact that the Germans had almost no troops on the Oder line. The troops

Rokossovsky, moving into Pomerania, would reliably cover the right flank of Zhukov's front. But then Stalin's attention began to shift more and more towards East Prussia. Probably several factors played a role here.

Stalin's next meeting with Roosevelt and Churchill was approaching (it took place in Yalta on February 4-11). The Soviet Union laid claim to a significant part of East Prussia with Königsberg. Probably, Stalin wanted to present the allies with a fait accompli,

capturing

by the time the Yalta Conference began, Königsberg and most of East Prussia. Perhaps he was afraid that in the last days of the war the Germans there might capitulate to the Anglo-American landing. Therefore, the armies of Rokossovsky were turned against

East Prussian group. After that, the enemy was forced to transfer units defending in the south of East Prussia against the main forces of the 2nd Belorussian Front, along

Augustow Canal against the 50th Army of I.V. Boldin, leaving only a weak barrier.

The army commander did not notice this maneuver, continuing to report that the enemy was on the defensive in the previous grouping, and Rokossovsky removed him.

Failed to capture Elbing on the move. The tank detachment that broke into the city was surrounded and destroyed.

The Graudenz fortress also withstood the first Soviet attacks. But already on January 26, the 5th Guards Tank Army reached the coast of the Frisch-Gaff, blocked Elbing and cut off East Prussia from the rest of Germany.

However, it was not possible to capture Königsberg and the main part of East Prussia either by February 4 or by March 1. Well-fortified and desperately defended Königsberg, as you know, fell only 6

April, when the main troops defending the city left it. But this circumstance still had no effect on the decisions of the conference.

Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to give Königsberg to Stalin. Occupation zones in Germany were also agreed, with Berlin

in the Soviet zone, but to be controlled by all three powers. It would seem that now it was free to attack Berlin.

Already on February 10, 1945, Zhukov reported to Stalin about the plan for the Berlin offensive. The purpose of the operation was "to disrupt the operational concentration of the enemy, to break through his defenses on the western bank of the river. Oder and capture the city of Berlin. According to Zhukov, the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front were ready to

launch an offensive on Berlin on February 20th. They already owned at that moment the Kustrinsky bridgehead on the

western bank of the Oder. But on the same day, February 10, by the directive of Stavka 50, 3.48 and the 5th Guards

Tank Army were transferred from the 2nd to the 3rd Belorussian Front to complete the defeat of the East Prussian grouping. Thus,

Rokossovsky's ability to continue the offensive in Pomerania was significantly weakened.

Obviously, the plan for the attack on Berlin was approved by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, since already on February

13, Zhukov gave directives to his armies to conduct the Berlin operation. The army offensive plans were to be ready

by February 17, but the exact time for going on the offensive was not set. The tasks for the armies were scheduled for the first

four days of the operation.

After that, it was supposed to start the assault on Berlin. However, after the start of the German counter-offensive in Pomerania on February 16, Stalin turned a significant part of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front against the enemy's Pomeranian grouping. Although in reality this grouping was too weak to seriously threaten the encirclement of the Soviet troops advancing towards the Oder and Neisse. It consisted of only two tank, three motorized and one infantry divisions, while Zhukov had four tank armies alone. The counter-offensive in Pomerania, called Operation Sonnenwende (Solstice), was carried out by the 10th SS Panzer Division Frundsberg, the 4th SS Motorized Police Division, the 11th SS Motorized Division Nordland, the 23rd SS Motorized Division "Netherlands", units of the 28th SS Motorized Division "Wallonia", the 503rd SS Heavy Panzer Battalion, the Holstein Panzer Division, the Fuhrer Grenadier Division and the 911th Assault Gun Division. Here it should be noted

What

the SS division "Wallonia" numbered only about three thousand people, that is, it was rather a reinforced regiment. The Frundsberg division had 87 tanks and 28 assault and self-propelled guns. The Holstein division had only 25 tanks. Taking into account the battalion of "tigers" and a separate division of assault guns, as well as tanks, the tank regiments of motorized divisions in the strike force had about 200 armored vehicles. Funny

to think that such a number of tanks and assault guns could break through to the rear of 1-th

Belorussian Front, and even more so to defeat its tank armies and encircle part of the Soviet troops. In addition, sooner or later, the divisions of the group that had released the encircled garrison of Arnswalde would have to turn against the 2nd Belorussian Front, which was advancing in Eastern Pomerania. Moreover, the German divisions failed to achieve significant advancement. They were stopped by the troops of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front.

As noted by military historians A. T. Zavyalov and T. E. Kalyadin,

"The enemy, who reinforced his troops defending in Eastern Pomerania, managed to stop the advance of the troops of the armies of the left wing of the 2nd Belorussian Front by stubborn resistance in previously prepared positions, and the forces of the troops of the 11th Army, which consisted almost

completely out

tank and motorized formations of the SS, launch counterattacks on the troops of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front, slow down their advance in the Stettin direction, and push our troops to the south in certain sectors of the front.

Despite some complication of the situation on the right wing, the commander of the troops

The

1st Belorussian Front still considered the main task for its subordinate troops to be the preparation and conduct of an offensive operation in the Berlin direction. He

believed that in

his

there are sufficient forces at the disposal on the right wing of the front to fend off

possible enemy strikes, as well as to assist the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front

V

the defeat of the enemy army group "Vistula" in Eastern Pomerania and the speedy exit of their

To

Stettin and the Pomeranian Bay, without violating or postponing preparations for the Berlin operation.

In his proposals submitted to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command on February 17, 1945, the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front asked

to approve the following decision on the further actions of the troops of the right wing of the front.

In order to assist the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front, he assumed on February 19

apply

a strong blow against the enemy and, throwing him back to the north, go to the front of Lubow, Tempelburg, Falkenburg, Dramburg, Wangerin, Gollnow, Stettin and

cut off the escape routes of the Pomeranian grouping of enemy troops to the west. To accomplish this task, the 61st and 2nd Guards

tank

army, the 7th Guards Cavalry Corps (commander Major General Konstantinov M.P.), the 1st Army of the Polish Army and part of the forces of the 3rd Shock Army,

and the main blow was to be delivered by one combined arms, one tank army and one cavalry frame. The auxiliary strike was planned to be carried out by

two divisions of the 1st Army of the Polish Army and part of the forces of the 3rd Shock Army. All other forces of the troops of the right wing of the front, by decision of

the commander, were to continue to carry out the previously assigned tasks of reaching the line of the river. The Oder were not involved in tasks in

Eastern Pomerania either.

This decision of the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front was approved by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, and the troops of the right wing of the front, after a short preparation on February 19, went on the offensive. In the area from Callis to Ban, intense fighting again unfolded.

<...> The battles showed that the troops of the right wing of the front, involved in solving problems in Eastern Pomerania, due to the ever-increasing opposition of the

enemy, would not be able to solve them. The danger of the enemy inflicting a more powerful blow on the troops of the right wing of the front was not ruled out. This

assumption was confirmed by the fact that the enemy in this area

there were five

tank divisions, several separate tank battalions and brigades. In addition, the fascist German command continued to bring new formations to the front line, reinforcing their 3rd Panzer and 11th Armies with them.

Due to the situation on the right wing and the ever-increasing fierceness of the fighting in the center, the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front decided to go on the defensive with the armies of the right wing of the front in order to bleed the enemy with defensive battles and prepare the troops to parry his most powerful blow from the region of Eastern Pomerania to flank and rear

front.

This decision of the commander of the front formed the basis for the subsequent actions of the armies of the right wing until they went over to the offensive. Thus ended the fighting on the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front at the first stage of the East Pomeranian operation.

If we take an objective look at the course of events, it turns out that nothing extraordinary happened in Eastern Pomerania in February. The battles went on with varying success. In some areas, Soviet troops pressed the Germans, in other areas the Germans managed to stop and a little

crush the attackers. But there was no threat of a German breakthrough to the rear of the 1st Belorussian Front. As early as February 19, both Zhukov and Headquarters were confident that the armies of the 1st Belorussian Front could continue their march to the Oder and further to Berlin. And only on February 22, the Headquarters decided not later than

March 1 to turn against the East Pomeranian grouping the main forces of the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front, temporarily refusing to attack Berlin. This decision was justified not by the situation in Pomerania, but by the threat of the transfer of new German forces there both from Courland and from the Western Front. It is possible that Stalin was worried about the 6th SS Panzer Army, which at that time was being transferred to the Eastern Front. But Hitler used it to counterattack in Hungary, which slightly delayed the capture by the Red Army of the last oil fields and refineries at the disposal of Germany.

Rather, all the same, political rather than military-strategic motives prevailed in the refusal to attack Berlin. Probably, Joseph Vissarionovich did not trust the allies and was afraid that they would land troops in Pomerania and East Prussia in order to accept the surrender of German troops there. Just on February 8-10, the offensive began and successfully developed.

allies to

Rhine, culminating in the encirclement of the main German forces on the Western Front. Stalin, not without reason, feared that the Germans would surrender

to the British and Americans, who signed the Geneva Convention on the Humane Treatment of Prisoners of War, much more willingly than

Soviet

troops not bound by any conventions. Therefore, he was in a hurry to occupy East Prussia, and Pomerania, and even Courland, although in fact the Allies had no

plans to occupy these territories.

Stalin might have been particularly concerned about the possible landing of the Allies in Pomerania, which, according to

the agreement reached at Yalta was to be transferred to Poland. With some imagination, which Stalin certainly possessed, one could imagine landing here

together with

Anglo-American troops of divisions of the Polish army Anders, moving to Gdansk Polish

governments from London and the creation in Poland of the dual power that so frightened Stalin.

At the end of February 1945, Rokossovsky's wife, Yulia Petrovna, visited his sister Helena in Warsaw, having specially arrived from Brodnitsa, where the

headquarters of the 2nd Belorussian Front was then located. She gave her a letter from her brother dated February 22, 1945. Konstantin reported the death of their

sister Maria in 1915 or 1916 in an evacuation in Russia and urged Helena to come to him without delay. And so Helena and Konstantin met after thirty years of

separation. They talked for a long time about life, about the fate of relatives and friends. Then Helena returned to Warsaw. She was present at Rokossovsky's

meeting with Field Marshal Montgomery and at the Victory Parade in Moscow. Then, at a reception in the Kremlin, Rokossovsky introduced Helena to

Stalin. Subsequently, she recalled that her brother, showered with orders and other distinctions, always experienced discomfort from honors. He felt best of all among

fighting friends and at the family hearth.

With the help of the 1st Belorussian Front, Rokossovsky's armies quickly defeated the enemy's Pomeranian grouping and blocked the garrisons of Danzig and

Gdynia. Konstantin Konstantinovich

recalled: "It was clear that the Nazi command would try to use my

East Pomeranian grouping to give a decisive battle to the Soviet troops and these

delay their advance towards Berlin. We already knew that the fascist leadership, by concentrating the efforts of its troops against the Red Army, was deliberately

weakening its western front and was already looking for ways to collude with the governments of the United States and Britain about

imprisonment

separate world.

The situation urgently required us to speed up the defeat of the Nazis in Eastern Pomerania in order to free up as many forces as possible for a decisive blow in the Berlin direction. That is why the Stavka directed the efforts of two fronts at once against the East Pomeranian enemy grouping. According to her instructions, the 2nd and 1st Belorussian fronts were to advance on adjacent flanks to the north, striking in the general direction on Kolberg (Kolobzheg). The dividing line between the fronts is Linde, Neu-Stettin, Kolberg. After cutting the enemy grouping, the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front liquidate its eastern part, capture the cities of Danzig (Gdansk) and Gdynia with access to the Danzig Bay, and the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front destroy the enemy in the western part of Pomerania, moving towards the Oder River.

Here Rokossovsky seemed to be hinting that it was feared that Germany will conclude

separate peace with England and the United States or unilaterally capitulate to the Western allies, and forced the Soviet leadership, that is, Stalin, to postpone the capture of Berlin and first carry out the East Pomeranian operation. A. S. Zavyalov and T. E. Kalyadin write about the same: "It should be pointed out that, by concentrating the efforts of its troops against the Soviet Army, the fascist leadership of Germany deliberately weakened its forces on the Western Front and was already looking for ways to collude with the governments of the United States and England on the conclusion of a separate peace. Thus, the developing situation required the acceleration of the defeat of the enemy in Eastern Pomerania. Finish off the enemy's East Pomeranian grouping as soon as possible and free both

as many forces as possible to deliver a decisive blow in the Berlin direction - such was the immediate and urgent task of our troops operating in Eastern Pomerania.

Konstantin Konstantinovich recalled:

"The retreating enemy still managed to occupy the Gdynia-Danzig fortified area prepared in advance. He was helped by the conditions of the terrain and the spring thaw. Retreating, the Nazis destroyed and mined roads, lowered dams, flooded entire areas. And the refugees terribly interfered with us. Goebbels' propaganda drove so much into the heads of the Germans

slander about the Soviet troops, that people in horror left their homes, only hearing about

our approach. Taking home belongings with them, they fled with their whole families to where eyes

are looking. Highways and lanes were packed with mad people. Some fled to the west, others to the east. In addition, the roads were cluttered with military equipment abandoned by the Nazis. The troops with great difficulty made their way ... "

On March 28, Rokossovsky's troops, at the time of the East Pomeranian operation, occupied Gdynia by the 1st Guards Tank Army, and on March 30, Danzig (Gdansk). The remnants of the German garrison took refuge in the swampy mouth of the Vistula. Now, during the Berlin operation, the 2nd Belorussian Front was to cross the Oder in its lower reaches and advance further towards the Elbe towards the British troops.

On April 6, 1945, Rokossovsky visited Stalin for the last time before the surrender of Germany. Together with him, Antonov, Shtemenko and Bulganin were present in the Kremlin office. This time, Iosif Vissarionovich preferred to receive the commanders of the fronts participating in

Berlin operation, apart. On April 3, Zhukov and Konev visited him. Perhaps, taking Konstantin Konstantinovich separately from the commanders of those fronts who were to directly take Berlin, Joseph Vissarionovich sought to emphasize his special attention

to Rokossovsky, and at the same time sweeten the pill, emphasizing that the offensive of the 2nd Belorussian Front is just as important as the offensive of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian Fronts.

On April 6, 1945, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the 2nd Belorussian Front of Rokossovsky was tasked with:

"Prepare and conduct an offensive operation in order to force the river. Oder, defeat the enemy's Stettin grouping and, no later than 12-15 days of the operation, capture the line: Anklam, Demmin, Malkhin, Waren, Pritzwalk, Wittenberg. The main blow was ordered to be applied

by the forces of three combined arms armies with two tank and one mechanized corps from the area north of Schwedt in the general direction of Strelitz. The Headquarters also demanded in the breakthrough area with the help of three artillery divisions to create a density of at least 150 barrels of caliber from 76 millimeters and above per one kilometer of the breakthrough front. Under favorable conditions, use

the success of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front to curtail the enemy's defense along the river. Oder. At the same time, part of Rokossovsky's forces had to operate from behind the right wing of the 1st Belorussian Front. The time for the transition to the offensive was not determined by the directive for reasons of secrecy.

It was only indicated that "the beginning of the operation in accordance with the instructions received by you personally."

During the preparation of the Berlin operation, the Soviet command carried out active disinformation measures. Speaking at a scientific conference in 1946, boss

Major-General N. M. Trusov of the Intelligence Directorate of the 1st Belorussian Front, in particular, stated: "The front command carried out a number of measures that made it difficult for the enemy to guess the direction of our strike, the strength of this strike and the time of the offensive. Measures to deceive the enemy were carried out according to a special plan. This plan was fully implemented,

And

the enemy reacted to it. For example, on the eve of our speech, Swedish radio broadcast that the attack on Berlin would be carried out by deep envelopment of Berlin from the north and south, that in the center of the attack on Berlin there would be holding operations. In confirmation

this

statements, the following consideration was given that Marshal Zhukov coordinates all three fronts advancing on Berlin: armies under the command of Rokossovsky are advancing from the north, armies under the command of Sokolovsky are advancing in the center, and armies under the command of Sokolovsky are advancing from the south

command of Konev. This message from the Swedish correspondent will be understandable if the enemy knows the plan of our deceptive actions.

On April 12, 1945, the intelligence department of the 2nd Belorussian Front assessed strength enemy:

"In front of the 2nd Belorussian Front, at the line of Berg, Vollin, Stettin, Schwedt, 70 km long, enemy 3 TA formations are defended, consisting of 3 TK, presumably 39 TK and two AK n / N.

In the first line, pr-k has: infantry. divisions - 1 (281st infantry division), divisional groups - 1 (divisional group "Schwedt"), battle groups - 1 (combat group "Kreuz"), separate regiments - 4 (1st and 2nd guards, serfs, 4 PP "Pomerania", 1st Parachute Regiment 0s0b, designation), separate special. battalions - 8 (6th school of the Air Force, 2nd naval battalion, 3rd anti-aircraft school, consolidated naval battalion, 1098th security battalion, SS battalion, marine battalion, Aschenbach battalion).

In total in the first line up to 31 infantry. and special battalions.

The active units were reinforced: 503 TB of RGK, 8th anti-tank brigade, art. parts

406th art. hulls

(three hulls), two hulls n / n, four zen. ap (11, 34,411] and 611 ap), three zen. hell (272, 291 and 616 hell).

In the reserve - on re-formation and resupplying, the enemy has: TD - 1 (22 TD in the Posevalk area), PD - 1 (15 RD SS (Lat.) in the area of north - west

Stettin), up to 2 PD in the formation in the Penzlin area (southwest of Neubrandenburg), regiments - 1 (1st Romanian regiment in the Nieder-Landin area - 10 km north - west of Schwedt).

In the front line to the line Rostock, Berlin, air reconnaissance revealed the deployment of more than 400

enemy aircraft of various types.

Later, on the basis of captured documents, the composition of the 3rd Panzer Army opposing the front was determined as follows: four corps

(10th, 32nd army, 46th Oder tank and army corps), nine infantry, one tank and two motorized divisions, as well as two motorized and six infantry

brigades, four divisional battle groups, 22 separate regiments and 39 separate battalions.

These data seem exaggerated, especially at the expense of individual battalions and regiments. If there really were so many of them, then the Germans

could not have had only 31 battalions in the front line. Most likely, the German forces were exaggerated due to the formations of the Volkssturm,

which were considered by the Soviet side as separate units, following the example of the Soviet

militia divisions. The Germans, in fact, poured the Volkssturm into the personnel divisions as a replenishment, but never used it as separate units.

According to Soviet intelligence, the enemy grouping against the 2nd Belorussian Front was significantly weakened due to the transfer of troops

to the Berlin direction. With no more than 31 battalions in the first line (no more than 30 thousand soldiers and officers, even if we consider the German

battalions to be full-blooded, which had not been the case for a long time by the end of the war), the Germans could not hope to hold the front in the lower

reaches of the Oder for any long time. Indeed, in the front of Rokossovsky by April 16 - the day the Berlin offensive operation began - there were

441,600 people, more than half of whom were in the first line. This is not counting those troops that blocked the German garrisons in the Danzig area

and on the Putziger-Nerung spit. Excellence in

forces was at least sevenfold.

By the way, according to Major Siegfried Knappe, the former head of the operations department of the headquarters of the 56th Panzer Corps, the Berlin garrison during the Berlin operation consisted of no more than 60 thousand people with 50-60 tanks. The backbone of the garrison consisted of four of the five divisions of the 56th Corps. They were opposed by at least a million-strong group of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts with more than 1,500 tanks and self-propelled guns.

On April 15, 1945, Hitler addressed the army for the last time:

"Soldiers of the Eastern Front!

For the last time, the mortal enemy in the person of the Bolsheviks and the Jews goes on the offensive. He is trying to defeat Germany and destroy our people. You soldiers of the Eastern Front know for the most part already themselves, what fate is prepared primarily for German women, girls and children. While old people and children will be killed, women and girls will be reduced to barracks prostitutes. The rest will go to Siberia.

We foresaw this offensive and since January of this year we have been doing everything to build a solid front. The enemy will be met by powerful artillery. The losses of our infantry are compensated by numerous new units.

Assault units, new formations and Volkssturm detachments reinforce our front. The Bolsheviks this time will suffer the fate of the Asians, they will be inflicted a bloody defeat at the walls of Berlin.

Whoever does not fulfill his duty at this moment acts as a traitor to his people. Regiment or

the division that has left their positions will behave so vilely that they will have to be ashamed of the women and children who have withstood the air terror of the enemy. First of all, watch out for the few traitor officers and soldiers who, in order to maintain a tolerable life in Russian slavery, will probably fight against us in German uniforms. Anyone who gives you the order to retreat, and you do not know him exactly, must be immediately seized and, if necessary, immediately shot, no matter what rank he is. If in these coming days and weeks every soldier on the Eastern Front does his duty, the last onslaught of the Asians will be crushed against our defenses, equally

just as the invasion of our enemies in the West will eventually fail.

Berlin will remain German, Vienna will be German again, and Europe will never be Russian.

Form a monolithic community to protect not the empty concept of "Fatherland", but to protect your homeland, your wives, your children, and with them your future.

During these hours, the entire German people is looking at you, my Eastern fighters, and only hopes that your steadfastness, your fanaticism and your weapons will drown the Bolshevik onslaught in a sea of blood. At the moment when fate has removed the biggest war criminal of all time from the face of the earth (meaning the death of Franklin Roosevelt. - B.S.), the outcome of this war is being decided.

In addition to calls for a fanatical struggle against the Bolsheviks, the Fuhrer no longer had any means of influencing the course of a hopeless struggle. The hope of a quarrel between Stalin and the Western allies did not come true either - they were still united by the desire to put an end to Nazi Germany.

The later time for the transition of Rokossovsky's troops to the offensive compared to the other two fronts - April 20, and not April 16 - was determined by the fact that the 2nd Belorussian Front needed to transfer the main forces from the right flank to the left, from Eastern Pomerania to the Oder.

In the Berlin operation, three Soviet fronts, numbering more than 2062 thousand soldiers

And

officers, opposed, even taking into account the hastily formed 12th Army of General of the Panzer Troops Walter Wenck, transferred to Berlin already during the battle, only about 500 thousand soldiers and officers. Such a preponderance of the Soviet armies in the Berlin direction was explained by the fact that until April 21, Hitler did not intend to remain in Berlin, but was going to move south, to the so-called "Alpine fortress", and hold out there as long as possible in the hope that Stalin and the Western allies still quarrel with each other. Therefore, on the Soviet-German front, the strongest was the Army Group Center operating in Czechoslovakia, which numbered a million soldiers and officers. However, after the start of the attack on Berlin, Hitler realized that the end was near and inevitable, and therefore decided that it would be better for him to die in the capital of the Reich, and not in some obscure Alpine village, and remained in Berlin.

In the report on the military operations of the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front for April - May 1945

of the
year, drawn up on February 20, 1946, it was said:

"Having completed the defeat of the Danzig-Gdyn enemy grouping by capturing Danzig and Gdynia, the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front in the period from 4.4 to 15.4.45, following the directive of the Headquarters

of the Supreme High Command No. 11 053 dated 1.4.45, made a combined march
—
250-350 km.

The main forces of the troops of the front concentrated on the east. bank of the river The Oder at the turn of the Walddivens (on the coast of the Baltic Sea), Schwedt and by the end of 16.4 took up the starting position for the offensive.

Directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command No. 11 062 dated 6.4.45, the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front were assigned the following task: to force the river. Oder, defeat the Stettin enemy grouping and, no later than 12-15 days of the operation, capture the border: Anklam, Demmin, Malkhin, Waren, Pritzwalk, Wittenberge. Deliver the main blow from the area north of Schwedt in the general direction of Strelitz.

Subsequently, by the directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command No. 11 071 of 18.4.45, the task was set:
after forcing the river. Oder, no later than 22.4.45, with the main forces to develop an offensive to the south-west in the general direction of Greifenberg, Gross Schönebeck, Birkenwerder, striking around Berlin from the north.

On April 17-19, according to the same report, the troops of the front "conducted reconnaissance in force, advanced detachments fought in the interfluvium of the Ost Oder and West Oder, took possession of the interfluvium and went to the east. coast of the West Oder on the Altdamm, Schwedt front.

Before the start of the Berlin operation, Rokossovsky announced to his army commanders: "First of all, comrades, I will convey to you the demand of the Headquarters. The offensive of our troops must be carried out with unabated force day and night. The days of Nazi Germany are numbered. But the pace is now not only military problem. This is a problem of big politics."

The main task of the 3rd Belorussian Front was to prevent the transfer of the 3rd Panzer Army, General of the Panzer Forces, Baron Hasso von Manteuffel, to Berlin. Left wing of the front

a strike to the northwest was to press Manteuffel's army to the Baltic Sea and destroy it. With a blow to Strelitz, the front of the German 3rd Panzer Army was cut into pieces.

Right flank 32-th

army corps, the army corps "Oder" and the left flank of the 46th tank corps were to be destroyed during the breakthrough. With the release of the shock group of Soviet troops to line

Rostock - Wismar - Schwerin - Lenzen, the northern flank of the 3rd Panzer Army was pressed against the shores of the Baltic. The main blow was delivered by the 70th and 49th armies.

The main attention of the commander of Army Group Vistula, Colonel General Gotthard Heinrici, was now focused on the northern flank of the front, which stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Hohenzollern Canal. The troops of Marshal Rokossovsky were completing preparations for an offensive on the western bank of the Oder, and this fact did not escape the attention of General Manteuffel. The day before, he boarded a reconnaissance plane and flew over Soviet positions.

The 2nd Belorussian Front faced a difficult task. To the north of Schwedt, the Oder divided into two branches, and the entire area in this area was heavily swamped.

On the night of April 19, Rokossovsky reported to Stalin that the offensive would begin the next morning at the same time as sunrise. It will be preceded by massive artillery and aviation preparation.

On April 20, Rokossovsky's troops launched the main offensive. They crossed the Western Oder, "captured a number of bridgeheads and advanced up to 2 km in some directions. They took possession of the strong strongholds of Schillersdorf, Unter Schiningen. At the same time, up to 25 enemy counterattacks were repulsed. At the scientific conference of the Northern Group of Forces in 1945, Rokossovsky stated: "We decided to force it (Oder. - B.S.) where there were so-called dams. This decision was the result of personal reconnaissance and turned out to be correct (the decision on the map

could be different). The operation was going to be difficult, to a certain extent risky, but with our artillery we could go for it. In this regard, I reiterate my point,

that not a single river in modern conditions is an insurmountable obstacle. The task of a breakthrough on the river. The Oder was completed as we planned it."

On April 25, the commander of the 3rd Panzer Army, General von Manteuffel, reported that the troops of Rokossovsky's 2nd Belorussian Front had broken through the German defenses south of Stettin. Since the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front were already on the western bank of the Oder and were rapidly advancing, on April 28, the commander of the Vistula Army Group, General Gotthard Heinrici, allowed Manteuffel to withdraw his formations in a westerly direction to Mecklenburg, although this was contrary to Hitler's order, which forbade withdrawal from Oder. When Field Marshal Keitel accidentally discovered the retreating columns of the 3rd Panzer Army the next day, he removed Heinrici from his post, replacing him with Kurt Student. Before the arrival of Student, who never reached the troops, having surrendered to the allies, the army group was taken over by General Kurt von Tippelskirch.

On April 27, troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front captured the cities of Prenzlau and Angermünde. On April 30, they took the cities of Greifswald, Treptow, Neustrelitz, Furstenberg, Gransee in northwestern Pomerania and Mecklenburg. On May 1, Stralsund, Grimmen, Demmin, Malchin, Waren, Wesenberg were occupied. May 2 - Rostock and Warnemünde. The resistance of the Germans almost completely stopped. They sought to reach the line of British troops as soon as possible in order to surrender to them. 3

May on

line Wismar - Wittenberg, Rokossovsky's troops connected with the troops of the British Field Marshal Montgomery. On May 4–6, the armies of the 2nd Belorussian Front occupied the islands of Wolin, Usedom, and Rügen, and on May 5 captured the large naval base of Swinemünde.

The remnants of Manteuffel's 3rd Panzer Army and SS-Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner's 21st Army quickly retreated to the west. To do this, they were subordinate to Field Marshal Ernst von Busch, commander-in-chief in the northwest, who was also subordinate to the German troops in Denmark and Holland, who fought against the armies of Montgomery.

On the afternoon of May 4, General Admiral Hans Georg von Friedeburg and General of the Infantry Ebergard Kinzel, Bush's Chief of Staff, at Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's command post in the Lüneburg Heath, signed the surrender terms for all German forces stationed in North West Germany, Denmark and Holland. So the German troops who fought against the Rokossovsky front ended up in British captivity.

The armies of Rokossovsky managed to capture Pomerania and part of Mecklenburg, but failed to surround and capture the formations of the 3rd tank and 21st armies, numbering just over 100 thousand

Human. Under the circumstances, it was hardly possible to do so. Firstly, the German troops, who received the Heinrici order, quickly retreated towards the British troops, and the supply of the Soviet troops was limited by the capacity of the pontoon crossings across the lower Oder. Secondly, even if the 2nd Belorussian Front had its three

tank and with one mechanized corps, by some miracle, the Germans would have been able to cut off the land routes of retreat to the west, the enemy would still have ports from which the German fleet evacuated to the west until the day of Germany's unconditional surrender.

The fact that the official irretrievable losses of the Soviet troops during the Berlin operation strongly are underestimated, the following example proves. Irretrievable losses during this operation are determined at 81,116 people, including the losses of the 1st and 2nd armies of the Polish Army. At this the irretrievable losses of the two Polish armies, according to the official publication of the Russian Ministry of Defense, amounted to only 2825 people. However, the official data of the Polish

The ministries of defense, published in 2005, testify that the irretrievable losses of the two Polish armies in the Berlin operation amounted to 7.2 thousand dead and 3.8 thousands missing, which gives an irretrievable loss of 11 thousand people, that is, almost four times more than in official Soviet sources. It can be assumed that in that

same the proportions are underestimated and the irretrievable losses of the rest of the troops participating in the Berlin operation. Then they should be about 316 thousand people, which probably exceeds the irretrievable losses of the German troops that opposed the Soviet troops in the Berlin operation. The losses of Rokossovsky's 2nd Belorussian Front in the Berlin operation can be roughly estimated at 50,000 dead and missing and 46,000 wounded.

On May 7, the first meeting between Rokossovsky and Field Marshal Montgomery took place. On the night of May 8, Konstantin Konstantinovich reported to Stalin about it:

"1. Today, 7.5.45, at 12.00 in Wismar, I met with Field Marshal Montgomery.

From our side, this meeting was attended by: Subbotin, Tsanova, Bogolyubov, Sokolovsky (art.), Vershinin (4th VA), Vinogradov (front scout).

From the side of the British - nine generals, led by Field Marshal Montgomery.

For the meeting, a guard of honor was lined up and a salute from 19 guns was given.

The meeting was held in a friendly atmosphere and lasted two hours.

And this is how Rokossovsky described the meeting with Field Marshal Montgomery in his memoirs:

“Even before entering the city, we are met by British officers in ordinary field uniforms, only not in helmets, but in berets. After a short official ceremony, they accompany us

To

the residence of his commander. It is felt that the British are trying to make the meeting as warm as possible. We answered the same.

Here is Field Marshal Montgomery. We exchange strong handshakes and congratulations on

victory. The British strictly observe the ritual. A gun salute is thundering, the ranks of the guard of honor are frozen. And after the ceremony, a lively conversation ensued. Our and British generals and officers are drawn into a general conversation. It is conducted both through translators and without them. Montgomery's demeanor is evident, and the general mood is conveyed to him.

Of course, there were photographers, artists, correspondents, there were too many of them, I would say. Perhaps there is

nothing to be surprised about. After all, this was the first meeting of military leaders

two allied armies after a four-year bloody war with a common enemy - fascist Germany.

When everyone got to know each other, the field marshal invited me into the hall. Food is on the tables. But not before him - people are still passionate about the conversation.

The field marshal and I were filmed at the map hanging on the wall. Filmed all: some alone, some in groups.

The meeting was warm and left a good impression on us. British officers, and myself

Montgomery, turned out to be actually simpler and more sociable than we imagined them to be. We warmly say goodbye. We are escorted by the same officers, led by General Bowles, commander of the airborne division.

We returned the courtesy with courtesy and invited Field Marshal Montgomery and his associates. It was decided to hold the reception with Russian hospitality.

We put the Kuban soldiers of the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps on the guard of honor

Oslikovsky on horseback,
in full Cossack uniform. They made a huge impression on Montgomery and his officers. The British followed the admiring glances of the famously retiring cavalry
for a long time. After the welcoming ceremony, the guests were invited to a large hall, where the table was skillfully and tastefully served. Sitting at a plentiful
table (the British had to talk standing up),

our guests
felt even better. The conversation took on a heartfelt character. Montgomery himself,
at first
trying in a very delicate manner to limit the time of his visit, he stopped looking at his watch and willingly got involved in a general
conversation.

In conclusion, our front-line ensemble performed with a concert. And I have to say, he was great. With this we finally conquered the British. Every number they
approved
such
a frantic ovation that made the walls tremble. For a long time Montgomery could not find words to express his delight and admiration.

Late in the evening, the field marshal and his officers said goodbye to us warmly.

This meeting instilled in us a sense of confidence that people from different countries, speaking different languages, and even with
different ideologies, if desired, can
live in friendship, respecting each other.

friend."

P. I. Batov also left us his sketch of the meeting with Montgomery:

"Shortly after Victory Day, Rokossovsky called:

Montgomery is coming over. Do you want to see an overseas guest?

Together with Nikolai Antonovich Radetsky, we went to the 70th Army, where this meeting was planned.

We stood in line, and the commander led the English field marshal, introducing people. Stopping in front of me, Rokossovsky said: "Here is the general, whose army opened the gate for us across the Oder." This phrase gave Radetzky and me a lot of trouble half an hour later. English

after the English Channel, they considered themselves unsurpassed masters of forcing water barriers.
But they
they understood what the Oder was near Szczecin, and bombarded us with questions: how was the forcing organized? Maybe there
were underwater
tanks or large airborne assault forces were used? One of the British, looking at my order bars, saw the badge of the order

British Empire
of the second degree and asked the translator why the general received this award.

- He was handed it after the Battle of Stalingrad. - ABOUT!
exclaimed the English general ardently. - There was the beginning of victory! ..

The English colleagues spoke enthusiastically about the Russian soldier, about the heroism of our people.
They said they were
proud of their great ally.

Then only his comrades remained. For the first time since the battles for the Oder, we gathered together.
Someone said that
a Victory parade is planned in Moscow. Consolidated troops will pass through Red Square
shelves
fronts.

They remembered the path they had taken. Many good sincere words were said to the front commander.
Rokossovsky,
with cheerful eyes, stood in a circle of officers and generals, listened, then waved his hand and said: "Drop
it, comrades, all
this. What could I do without all of you..."

Montgomery limited himself to a more modest buffet, and Rokossovsky threw a full-fledged banquet. And the point
here was
not only in the traditional Russian hospitality, although it undoubtedly stood in the first place. At the buffet
table, guests drink and
eat standing up, which allows them to move freely around the hall and talk to each other. According to
Rokossovsky,

lively
the conversation continued in the buffet hall, so the treat was somehow forgotten. At the banquet, everyone
sits in pre-
designated places at huge tables and the circle of interlocutors is limited to those who are sitting nearby.
In addition, a strict
protocol hierarchy is observed at the banquet table. Thus, the contacts of the British with Soviet
generals and officers were
limited. At the banquet table, they were much easier to control. True, the overwhelming majority of
Soviet generals and
officers did not know English or other foreign languages, and only British officers-translators could
communicate
with them.

The grandson of Marshal Konstantin Vilyevich Rokossovsky, according to his mother, said:

"In May 1945, my grandfather was in Western Pomerania. When it became known that the Germans had
surrendered, he gathered
his headquarters and announced this good news. There were no screams, no hugs - everyone was silent.

Grandfather understood the condition of his friends, suggested that everyone go out into the garden, sit down on a bench and

smoke. So, sitting in the garden, remembering the experience, he met Victory. Then there were fireworks, a reception at Field Marshal Montgomery's, a return reception, after which the British, exhausted from Russian hospitality, had to be taken home. Before that, there was such a curious incident: in March, the 45th grandfather was awarded the Order of Victory. Awarded twice. The thing is, when he was driving home,

the lock unbuttoned and the order fell to the floor in the car. My grandfather didn't even notice. The next day the driver arrived and solemnly presented him with this order for the second time.

According to Konstantin Vilyevich, at a banquet in honor of Montgomery, Rokossovsky made the first toast: "I propose to raise glasses to the organizers of our victories, to the leaders who ensured the complete defeat of Nazi Germany, to Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt." Konstantin Konstantinovich proved to be a good diplomat. It is noteworthy that he toasted the recently deceased President Roosevelt, whom he considered the true organizer of the victory, and not the incumbent President Truman.

It should be clarified here that on May 7, on the day Rokossovsky was at Montgomery's, the Chief of Staff of the Operational Command of the OKW, Colonel-General Alfred Jodl, signed the surrender of all German armed forces. Obviously, Rokossovsky and the generals of his headquarters noted this event by going out into the garden to smoke. And it is quite possible to believe that after the Russian banquet the British generals were taken out like logs. My late stepfather, Major General-Engineer Oleg Grigoryevich Lemtyuzhnikov, in 1942 an artillery officer, told how the personal representative of the US President, Senator Wendell Wilkie, came to visit them at the front. A banquet was given at the headquarters of the army (or front). Stepfather, of course, was not invited to this banquet - not according to rank. He could only watch how, after the banquet, the distinguished American guest was carried out unconscious.

And How

Valuable luggage was carefully loaded into the car. The banquet was during the day, and the next day Oleg Grigorievich read with surprise in the newspapers that on the evening of the day when the banquet took place, Wilkie was also present at some kind of solemn event in Moscow. The stepfather was amazed what the a few hours dead drunk American managed to come to his senses.

Meanwhile, the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front on May 9-14 in the area southeast of Danzig and on the Putziger-Nerung spit received prisoners from the capitulated enemy units. Behind

five days, 111,604 prisoners were taken, including 12 generals. On May 10, a landing detachment was sent to accept the surrender of German troops on the island of Bornholm.

In a report dated February 20, 1946, the results of the combat activities of the 2nd Belorussian Front were summed up as follows:

"Passed with fighting and maneuver:

right flank 200 km

center 190 km

left flank 180 km

The Eastern and Western Oder were forced on the front of 40 km on April 19-21, 1945. The territory of 26,910 square meters was cleared from the enemy. km

including the surrender of 940 sq. km.

Enemy losses and trophies of the 2nd Belorussian Front in the period from April 5, 1945 until the end of the war were estimated as follows:

"Enemy soldiers and officers destroyed 49,770 Captured 84,234

Total: 134,004."

In addition, after May 8, as part of the general surrender, 123,878 soldiers and officers were captured, including 15,134 in the area southeast of Danzig, 96,482 on the Putziger-Nerung spit and

the island of Bornholm - 12262. At the same time, 10 tanks and assault guns were taken. 184 aircraft were destroyed and 1458 were captured, 195 were destroyed and 85 tanks and assault guns were captured, 747 were destroyed and 1540 artillery pieces were captured, 360 were destroyed and 262 were captured.

mortar. Rokossovsky's troops released 65,541 Soviet prisoners of war and 63,515 Soviet civilians. In addition, 51,833 Allied prisoners of war and 16,634 civilians from allied countries.

It should be noted that in early May, the 43rd Army from the 3rd Belorussian Front was transferred to the 2nd Belorussian Front, which participated in the capture of the enemy grouping in the area of Danzig and Gdynia. Its commander, A.P. Beloborodov, in his memoirs, cites an obviously invented dialogue with Rokossovsky:

"On April 25, the army received an order to "make a march to the Marienburg region (30 km southwest of the city of Elbing), where to join the troops of the 2nd Belorussian Front." Simultaneously

staged

there was also a combat mission: "Destroy the enemy grouping west and southeast of the city of Danzig" ... I contacted the command post of the 2nd

Belorussian front. I confess, I was worried, waiting for Marshal of the Soviet Union K.K. Rokossovsky to pick up the phone.

I remembered the battle for Moscow, Ozerna, Istra, the city of Dedovsk, my native Far Eastern division.

Where is she now?

But here is a familiar voice:

- I'm

listening! - Comrade Marshal, the troops of the 43rd Army have concentrated in the starting areas ... - Oh, is that you, a Siberian? Again - to me?

He said it as if we broke up not more than three years ago, but only yesterday. And my excitement

as if taken by hand. Konstantin Konstantinovich did not forget anything, he did not betray himself in anything.

"This von Saucken worries me," the marshal continued, "makes me look back at the rear. Well, I'm glad you came. Press it well so that it doesn't squeal.

- Let's press, comrade commander ...

General von Saucken led the German 2nd Army. According to the information that we had, when we arrived at Danzig, this army had four infantry and one tank divisions, as well as a number of independent regiments and battalions. The total strength of the army was estimated at 20-25 thousand soldiers and officers, which was approximately equal to the strength of our 43rd Army (26 thousand people).

I will note in advance that information about the enemy, his combat and numerical strength turned out to be underestimated. In reality, the enemy outnumbered us many times over both in manpower and in technology.

This was all the more dangerous because, in preparing for the offensive, we did not receive

no

gains neither in artillery nor in tanks.

On May 6, I reported the offensive plan to the commander of the front, he approved it, noting at the same time that the surrender of all the armed forces of Nazi Germany was a matter of several days.

'But,' he added, 'be prepared to force Saucken to capitulate by force of arms.'

Such a turn of events is not excluded.

On May 8, an act of unconditional surrender of the Nazi armed forces was signed in Berlin. We were informed about this by radio, the news instantly spread in parts, and the sky over the Baltic lit up with flashes of thousands of shots. Everyone

saluted the Great Victory,
who wore

weapon. The front line of the enemy was silent. On May 9, in the morning, they pulled from there to our rear

columns of the surrendered 2nd German army. We took seventy thousand prisoners, and the flow seemed to have no end.

When I reported this to Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky, he was surprised: - Seventy thousand?
That's for sure?

On May 10, the reception of prisoners was completed. There were more than 140 thousand of them, including 12 generals.

Among them is the commander of the army Sauken.

After my next report, Konstantin Konstantinovich remarked:

"Can you imagine what a noise this army could have made if it hadn't been sitting around Danzig with folded arms?!"

Here Afanasy Pavlantievich, without hesitation, named the number of prisoners taken by his army, more than 16 thousand

more than the total number of German prisoners of war taken by the entire 2nd Belorussian Front during this period. The

number of prisoners taken in the Danzig area, the commander of the 43rd Army overestimated more than eleven times. And the

number of German troops in the Danzig area turned out to be overestimated by more than one and a half times. And someone

who, and Rokossovsky was well aware that the German army, whose strength did not exceed a full-blooded division, did nothing

she couldn't do anything serious in the rear of his front, and she couldn't say such nonsense to Beloborodov.

On May 14, Rokossovsky reported to Headquarters:

"1. The island of Bornholm is occupied by our troops. Removed from the island to 12,000 German soldiers and officers.

2. In connection with the occupation of the island, the following questions arose:

a) The island has an economic connection with the main territory of Denmark, such as: the supply of manufactured goods, food, mail exchange, etc. Should this connection be allowed in the future? Temporarily allowed it;

6) The island has an underwater cable and radio with Copenhagen, as well as local t / t communications throughout the island. Temporarily banned communication with Copenhagen, and allowed local t / t communication. I ask for guidance on what to do next;

c) On the island, he allowed full agricultural work and fishermen access to the sea for fishing;

d) From Copenhagen, they want to visit the island from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one English general. I ask for instructions on whether to give them this permission and how to proceed in the future.

3. In general, I ask you to urgently inform about the order of conduct on the island of Bornholm. Rokossovsky admitted in his memoirs:

"A lot of trouble gave us the Danish island of Bornholm, turned by the German fascist command into a naval base and a transshipment point for transferring

their

troops stuck on the Hel Spit, in the area of the Danzig Bay, and on isolated bridgeheads in Courland. Our offer to surrender to the commander of the German troops on the island, General Butman, and his deputy for naval affairs, Captain 1st Rank von Kemetz, was

rejected.

I had to start landing. Two rifle divisions of the 19th Army were loaded onto ships. I entrusted the organization of the landing operation to the head of the operational department of the front headquarters, General P.I. Kotov-Legonkov, who acted jointly with the commander of the Kolberg naval base. We all, of course, had to make our own efforts. Subsequently, worries arose with the provision of food and everything necessary for our troops landed on Bornholm. The Baltic Sea was littered with mines that were laid

both the Germans and the Allies. There was no documentation, work on trawling fairways only

started. Each flight to the island was fraught with great risk. On Bornholm, more than 12 thousand German soldiers and officers were disarmed and taken prisoner, and large war trophies were captured. Friendly relations were established between the Danish population of the island and our troops from

the very first day. The inhabitants of Bornholm enthusiastically greeted their liberators.

We are in Germany. Around us are wives and children, fathers and mothers of those soldiers who only yesterday came at us from

weapons in hand. More recently, these people fled in panic when they heard about the approach of Soviet troops. Now no one was running. Everyone was convinced of the falsity of fascist propaganda. Everyone understood that there was nothing to be afraid of the Soviet soldier. He won't offend. On the contrary, it will protect the weak, help

disadvantaged. Fascism brought the German people shame, misfortune, moral decline in eyes

of all mankind. But the Soviet soldier is humane and noble. He extended a helping hand to all who were blinded and deceived. And the Germans understood this very soon.

As soon as the troops stopped for a halt, hungry German children appeared at the soldiers' camp kitchens. And then the adults came along. We felt that Soviet soldiers

would share everything they had, would share with Russian generosity and with the responsiveness of people who had experienced a lot and learned to

understand and appreciate

life".

Of course, the marshal knew that everything or almost everything here was a lie. Including about Bornholm, on which the Soviet "guests"

sat up until the middle

of 1946, although, according to the whole logic of surrender, its garrison should have surrendered along with all German troops in Denmark to the same Montgomery. But

Stalin took into account the important strategic position of Bornholm in

Polish

coast. And he also wanted to take revenge on the Western allies in a peculiar way, to whom most of the soldiers of the

Eastern Front in Germany had surrendered. Since you snatched the main forces of the Vistula Army Group from under our

noses, then we will be content with at least Bornholm and its garrison!

Rokossovsky also had to write lies about the German population, which supposedly realized that there was nothing to be afraid of the Soviet soldier. But for

censorship reasons, it was impossible to write anything else. Yes, and the marshal himself, I'm afraid, carried out censorship of memory. And in his old age, he tried to

convince himself that there were no mass Soviet atrocities in the East German lands, but only individual minor excesses that were not worth the attention of posterity,

although he had to issue special orders to suppress these excesses.

And here is what Rokossovsky wrote about the German prisoners whom he met on the highway after the surrender:

"The column stopped to let our car through. Hundreds of German soldiers are looking at us.

Some with curiosity, most with dull indifference. Once they were different. With the triumph of the winners, they marched through the cities of Europe, plundered the

occupied countries. blood

ashes and ruins marked their path on our land. They boasted of their invincibility and managed to convince many of it until they ran into our soldier. Then there were battles near Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, Dnieper, Warsaw, Oder and Elba. Now nothing remains of the might of the Nazi army. Only columns of prisoners - confused, depressed people in shabby green uniforms. Many of them first thought seriously and began to think something. Let them think more! Defeat is also beneficial: it teaches, makes even

most narrow-minded people to take a sober look at life and understand the measure of their guilt and their responsibility to history.

Of course, under Rokossovsky, prisoners were not shot. This was done later when cars with high authorities drove on.

Chapter Twelve Woe to the Defeated!

The actions of Soviet troops on the territory of Germany and Eastern Europe, in addition to purely military - victorious, there was also a moral outcome. And so it turned out to be dual. Of course, the Soviet soldier brought the peoples of Europe, and the Germans themselves, liberation from Nazi occupation and oppression.

Let Soviet totalitarianism replace Nazi totalitarianism in the countries of Eastern Europe and East Germany, but it was noticeably softer, mainly because it was based not on racial, but on a class basis. The repressions of the Soviet special services and pro-Soviet communist regimes in Eastern Europe did not reach the scale of the Holocaust, although they certainly brought a lot of grief to the peoples of the region.

But this was only one side of the liberation mission of the Red Army. There was another, about which even today, 60 years later, they do not like to talk about something terrible and shameful, in which it is forbidden

be recognized both to ourselves and to the world around us even after many decades. The fact is that the behavior of the liberators in liberated Europe often turned out to be beyond good and evil. They were marked by mass rapes, robberies and killings of civilians. By

assessments of German historians and journalists based on data from medical institutions and

mortuaries of Berlin, only in the capital of the Reich about 200 thousand women were raped (most of the pregnant women turned to abortion clinics) and about 10 thousand

of them were killed by the Red Army or committed suicide. For the whole of East Germany, including the territories subsequently transferred to Poland and the USSR, this figure is again according to

according to German data - rises to 2 million raped and 100 thousand killed.

Of course, in different regions of Germany occupied by Soviet troops, the number of victims could be different, but there is no doubt that the number of

those killed was measured in tens or even hundred

thousand. By the way, the number of civilian casualties in Germany during the Second World War has not yet been calculated even approximately. More or less precisely, only the number

victims of air bombardments by allied aircraft - about half a million people. Postwar

large-scale population movements in the territory of the Reich, in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Also

accompanied by mass violence against the German population, do not allow today even approximately to calculate the number of deaths.

About why Soviet soldiers behaved in Germany and Europe so unbridled, even during the war, people who sympathized with the Soviet Union and the Red Army

wondered. Thus, the Australian war correspondent Osmar White, who spent the last military

and the first post-war months, in his memoirs he describes many cases of rape and robbery committed by soldiers of the British and American armies. He recalled:

"Long before the Allies reached the concentration camps, where the Sonderkommandos specialized in the extermination of Jews and Slavs, and the world knew what Hitler's words about the "Final Solution" meant, the soldiers who defeated the Germans began to overflow with anger and

revenge.

In France and Belgium, they learned first-hand about the atrocities of the Nazis: mass executions of hostages, senseless beatings and arson, sadistic

interrogations of those suspected of complicity in the resistance. Few doubted that the Germans deserved their fate. So, at first, the civilian population of Germany was treated harshly. Eisenhower's radio message "We come victorious!" implied that the command had the right to requisition any suitable housing in

dilapidated cities. Old people, sick people, children were often driven out of their houses into ruins so that they would worry about themselves.

"The only way to

teach Aghaib [the German word for sauerkraut. — B.S.] that there is nothing good in war is to treat them the way they once did with others". I have heard this

motto all the time. Victory meant the right to trophies.

The victors took away from the enemy everything that he liked: booze, cigars, cameras, binoculars, pistols, hunting rifles, decorative swords and daggers, silver jewelry, dishes, furs. This type of robbery was called "liberation" or "taking souvenirs".
<...> After the fighting moved to German soil, a lot of rapes were committed by the soldiers of the front-line units and those who followed directly behind them. Their number depended on

relation to this senior officers. In some cases, the perpetrators were identified, prosecuted and punished. Lawyers kept a secret, but admitted that for cruel and perverted sexual acts with German women, some soldiers were shot (especially in cases where they were Negroes). However, I knew that many women were also raped by white Americans. No action was taken against the criminals. <...>

Columns of freed slaves became a common sight on all rural roads. They
walked
in crowds in the spring rain, and often their torn bodies could be seen on the approaches to bridges - where they were blown up by mines. But they didn't stop. They were free and went where their eyes looked. The agricultural workers went first. They looked strong and full. They wore cast-off military uniforms from all European countries. Some had boots or boots, some walked barefoot even in the cold, others wrapped their feet in shreds of blankets or burlap. They looked very poor, but physically they were in good shape.

As the allied armies moved deeper into Germany, the view of those passing by began to change.

The columns no longer consisted of strong (or relatively strong) men. Many limped and were

obviously sick and exhausted. Among them were women and children. Nearly everyone had handcarts or baby carriages with luggage...

In general, the first slaves freed in the Rhineland did not show particularly vicious feelings towards their masters. Even with the inhabitants of Eastern Europe, the Germans treated like human beings, or at least least as with valuable livestock.

I remember how one elderly farmer woman approached the commander of a reconnaissance column near Besingheim and began to beg him to detain her Russian worker, who was about to leave. Her son and husband, according to her, were in the army, and without a Russian she had no one left for

farm work, and famine
awaited them in the winter. We looked at the Russian. He was a tough, sullen guy who was definitely going to leave...

The commander said something unprintable and signaled to move on. When I looked at the strange couple for the last time, the woman
was sitting in a ditch with her head in her hands, and the Russian was resolutely striding away...

The military authorities managed to establish some semblance of order in the liberated territories. But when former forced laborers
and concentration camp prisoners filled the roads and began to loot one town after another, the situation spiraled out of control.

Only a few who escaped from the camps or quit their jobs managed to find their way home. Most huddled in makeshift
refugee camps, barely surviving on meager rations requisitioned from local supplies. Some of the survivors of the camp gathered
in gangs in order to pay off the Germans. Sparsely populated areas that were not affected during the hostilities often suffered
from the robbery of these gangs. I well remember the village on the Flood River, where they showed me the torn bodies of two
children

seven and

twelve years old who became victims of drunken Russians who had been slaves for three years in a deep salt mine ...

Armored vehicles and allied guns, covered in fresh paint, rumbled along the road, moving at regular intervals.

The field uniform

was put in order, the shoes and insignia sparkled, all, without exception, were with award ribbons and medals for past battles. By

compared to these elegant columns entering the city from the west and northwest, the Russians leaving it looked like rabble.

Their padded jackets were greasy and tattered, their transport consisted of a mixture of old trucks and carts stuffed with looted

furniture, more

half

the soldiers were walking. They marched along the autobahn under the command of junior commanders who rode German

bicycles. Even the famous Russian guns were covered with a layer of dry mud.

A British correspondent traveling next to me said with horror in his voice: "My God, are these the very guys who made their way

from Stalingrad, striking sparks from Fritz along the way?" And in fact, they were soldiers of the army that defeated two-thirds of

the German ground forces on the Eastern Front, while the superbly armed British and Americans with great difficulty defeated the

remaining third in Normandy, Italy and the Siegfried Line. They were chunky

steppe peasants and shepherds. It was evident that there were no difficulties for them, and they were indifferent to the kind of mechanized power that was exposed to inflict on them

impression. Perhaps, I thought, simple war machines would never, in the long run, defeat a peasant hell-bent on driving out a foreign aggressor.

Radio, newspapers, politics, concerts... The Russians have wisely fueled rebirth in the desert of despair. They showed generosity to the followers of the monster, who lay in his lair under the mountains of rubble. But the Berliners did not look at the world the way the Russians would have liked. Everywhere was heard

whispering: "Thank God that you – the British and the Americans – came here... The Russians are animals... they took away everything I had... they rape, steal and shoot..."

The anti-Russian hysteria was so strong, there were so many stories about Russian atrocities that the chief of the Anglo-American Bureau of Public Relations found it necessary to gather correspondents in order to give "explanations". "Remember," he said, "that there is a strong and organized movement among the Germans aimed at sowing the seeds of mistrust among the Allies. The Germans are convinced that they will benefit from a split between us. I want

warn you not to believe German stories about Russian atrocities without carefully checking their authenticity..."

In any case, Russophobia was nothing new. The troops faced this all the way from the Rhine as they met thousands of people fleeing to the West and panic-stricken people. Russians are coming! Whatever it was, but you need to run away from them!

>

When it was possible to question one of them, it almost always turned out that they

know nothing about

Russians. They were told so. They heard it from a friend, brother or relative who served on the Eastern Front... Well, of course, Hitler lied to them! His theories about a superior race were absurd, as were the statements that the British were decadents, and the Jews were subhuman with a perverted consciousness ... But speaking of the Bolsheviks, the Fuhrer was right!

Goebbels' propaganda succeeded in one thing that was destined to survive the disappointment of defeat. She drove into the heads of the Germans a paranoid fear of "hordes from the East." When the Red Army approached the outskirts of Berlin, a wave of suicides swept the city. By

according to
some estimates, in May-June 1945, from 30 to 40 thousand Berliners voluntarily left
life.

To what extent did the behavior of the Russians fuel this orgy of self-destruction? I have asked these
questions
to many Berliners. If we discard exaggerations, then the picture turned out as follows: the Red Army captured
the city
in fierce battles, inflamed with a thirst for revenge. The Russians destroyed, plundered and raped in
exactly the same way as
the Germans (according to the stories of Polish refugees) did it four years ago in Poland and Russia...

These Russians are mysterious people! Rape - and apologies. Thefts - and attempts to make amends for them with food gifts. A wild
robbery of a ruined
city - and in a few days
attempts
restore it...

There was no terror in Prague or any other part of Bohemia by the Russians. Russians are harsh realists in relation to collaborators
and fascists, but a person with a clear
conscience has nothing to fear.

Severe discipline prevails in the Red Army. There are no more robberies, rapes and bullying here than in any other zone of occupation.
Wild atrocity stories emerge

because of
exaggerations and distortions of individual cases under the influence of Czech nervousness caused by the immoderation of the manners of Russian
soldiers and their love of vodka. One woman who told me most of the hair-raising tales of Russian brutality was eventually forced to admit that the
only
evidence she saw with her own eyes was drunken Russian officers firing their pistols into the air or at bottles..."

O. White was friendly to the Soviet Union and believed that the behavior of the Red Army did not fundamentally differ from the
behavior of the soldiers
of the Allied armies, and indeed from the behavior of soldiers of all times and peoples, exercising the "right of the winner." But evidence of
violence, killings
and looting from the territories occupied by the Red Army, on the one hand, and from the territories occupied by the armies of the Western Allies,
on the other, is
not comparable in scale. From the inhabitants of the Soviet zones of occupation, there is an order of magnitude more such evidence. Yes, and
allied

command relatively quickly put things in order. In the US Army, for example,

rape of German women was executed according to the sentences of the tribunals of 69 military personnel.

Of course, the Red Army also fought crimes: in total, 4,148 military personnel were convicted by tribunals for rape, robbery and murder of the civilian German population. But no one was convicted of rape in court. Rapists, along with murderers and marauders, were often shot at the scene of the crime by commanders without a verdict.

The fundamental difference between the behavior of the soldiers of the Western armies and the Red Army in Germany was not only in the scale of violence, but also in the fact that the Americans, the British

and the French raped but very rarely killed their victims. For Soviet soldiers, the murders of civilian Germans, and not only Germans, were commonplace.

Of course, the Red Army soldiers had a sense of revenge for everything that the Germans had done on Soviet soil. By the way, before the start of Operation Barbarossa, an order was issued that exempted Wehrmacht servicemen from liability for criminal offenses in the operation zone. However, very soon the German command had to abandon the application of this order, since robberies and rapes, as well as the killing of civilians, threatened to disintegrate the army. Therefore, German soldiers began to be punished for crimes against civilians. In the German military archive in Freiburg, about 80 thousand

criminal cases on crimes against the civilian population and on desertion. But such an orgy of unorganized murders and rapes, which Germany saw at the end of 1944 and in 1945, the Wehrmacht did not know even in the first months of the war with Russia, when the German soldiers were not yet connected with anything.

There was also an economic reason that determined the difference in the behavior of the Red Army and the military personnel of the American and British armies in relation to the civilian population.

American soldiers were supplied much better than Soviet ones. They had a cash allowance in full-weight dollars. They could buy a German woman for a pair of stockings or a pack of cigarettes. The Red Army soldiers themselves did not have enough tobacco. They often had nothing to offer a woman but a meager ration. This is also why the Red Army men more often took German women by force.

Of course, an important role in the violence and destruction that Soviet soldiers did in Germany was played by revenge for the fact that the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, for what they did in the occupied territories. However, it is unlikely that the "reciprocal" violence of the Soviet troops can be explained solely by revenge. After all, the same excesses as in Germany were characteristic of the Red Army in other European countries. For example, in Hungary. Here is Alain Poltz's memoir Woman and War. A young 22-year-old girl will forever remember the arrival of Soviet soldiers in Hungary:

"Even in Budapest, I saw posters on which a Soviet soldier rips off a cross from a woman's neck. I heard they rape women. I also read leaflets that said what the Russians were doing. I did not believe all this, I thought it was German propaganda. I was convinced

impossible

imagine them knocking women to the ground, breaking their spines and the like. Then I found out how they break the spine: it's as easy as shelling pears and it doesn't happen on purpose. Once one of the soldiers took away the watch from the Yugoslav priest. It was an old, large clock with Roman numerals on the dial, which he was very fond of. He complained to me. I think he spoke German, I understood him. I got terribly angry, went to the Russians, asked him to show the soldier who took the watch, stood in front of him and, cursing, demanded the clock back. Other soldiers were standing there, they watched and listened, but during the whole scene they did not say a word.

As a matter of fact, it is not difficult to communicate with Russians. You can also shout in Hungarian. The clock was returned to the priest.

Lord God, how naive I was then! I didn't know they were to be feared." Further, A. Poltz describes why the Russians should be feared:

"We went out into the L-shaped corridor. When we reached the middle of the corridor, without a word, I lashed out furiously at them. I kicked and beat them with all my might, but the next minute I was on the floor. No one uttered a sound, neither they nor I; we fought in silence. They dragged me into the kitchen and grabbed me so hard on the floor - apparently, I again wanted to defend myself or attack - that my head hit the corner of the trash can. It was of hard wood, as befits a dean's quarters. I lost consciousness.

I woke up in the dean's large inner room. The glass was shattered, the windows boarded up, the bed was nothing but bare boards. There I lay. I had one of

Russians. I heard,

how a woman's cry from the ceiling thundered: Mom, Mom! Then it dawned on me that it was my voice

and I scream myself.

As soon as I realized this, I stopped screaming and lay quietly, motionless. I regained consciousness, but did not feel my body, as if it was stiff or cold. Yes, I must have

been really cold - naked from the waist down, in an unheated room with no windows. I don't know how many Russian

raped

me after that, I don't know how many there were before. When dawn broke, they left me. I got up. It was difficult to move. My head and whole body ached.

There was a lot of blood flowing. I did not feel that I had been raped, I only felt that I had been beaten, crippled. Is not

had

nothing to do with caresses or sex. It didn't look like anything at all. It's just that now, when I'm eating these lines, I understand that the exact word is violence. That's

what it was.

I don't remember if it was then or another time, but they took everyone away with them. Even mom. I could still bear it, because I was already a married woman, but Mina -

she was a virgin. Walking through the house, I came across her, hearing crying; she was lying on the cement floor in some closet. I went to her. "It's

better not to go to the left," she said, "there are still Russians there, they will attack us again" ...

Another time at night a whole detachment broke into us, then they threw us on the floor, it was dark and cold, they were shooting around. A picture remained in my

memory: eight or ten Russian soldiers are squatting around me, and each in turn lies down on me. They set a quota of how many minutes for each.

They

looked at their wristwatches, lit matches every now and then, one even had

lighter -

kept track of time. They hurried each other. One asked: "Will the robot?" (By the way, Soviet soldiers hunted for watches in the first place.

A. Polts bitterly joked that after

There are no Russian watches left in Hungary at all. - B.S.)

I lay without moving. I thought I wouldn't survive. Of course, they don't die from it. If only does not break

spine, but even then you do not die immediately.

How much time has passed and how many there were - I do not know. By dawn, I realized how a spinal fracture occurs. They do this:

they put the

woman on her back, throw her legs to her shoulders, and

the man enters from above, kneeling. If you lean too hard, the woman's spine will crack. It turns out this is not on purpose: just in the heat of violence, no one restrains himself. The spine, twisted like a cochlea, is constantly squeezed, swayed at one point and they do not notice when it breaks. I also thought that they would kill me, that I would die in their hands. My spine was injured but not broken. Since in this position you always rub your back against the floor, the skin from my back was torn off, my shirt and dress stuck to the abrasion - it bled, but I turned

on this attention later. And then I didn't notice it - my whole body hurt so much.

Here we can say that Hungary fought against the USSR and the Hungarian soldiers, as notices the same

Poltz, "behaved in Russian villages not much more decently." Sometimes the executions of Hungarians were motivated by accusations of espionage. A bomb from a German bomber destroyed the Soviet headquarters, and the Russians suspected that someone had signaled to the Germans during the raid. After that, according to A. Polts, "unknown people came from a neighboring village and said: all the men were executed; forced to dig a long

hole, put on the edge and shot in the back of the head. Three local residents dug in a hole (this is usually done: you dig a grave for yourself - almost all

wars).

But the Serbs never fought against Russia and always considered the Russians their main

allies. And the Red Army, although it stayed in Serbia for only a month, managed to "check in" here not from the best side. One of the leaders of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, an ally of Tito, and later a well-known dissident Milovan Djilas testifies in

their memoirs:

"After the breakthrough of the Red Army into Yugoslavia and the liberation of Belgrade in the fall of 1944, there were so many serious attacks by the Red Army soldiers against Yugoslav citizens and military personnel in the fall of 1944 that this turned into a political problem for the new government and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav communists imagined

Red Army ideal, and in their own ranks they dealt mercilessly with even the most

petty robbers and rapists. Naturally, they were more amazed by what was happening than ordinary citizens, who, according to the experience of their ancestors, expect robbery and violence from any army. However, this

problem existed and was complicated by the fact that the opponents of the communists used the antics of the Red Army to fight against the still unstrengthened government and against communism in general. And also by the fact that the highest headquarters of the Red Army were deaf to complaints and

protests, and gave the impression that they deliberately turned a blind eye to violence and rapists."

Tito, Djilas, Rankovic and several other Yugoslav generals decided to discuss this problem with the head of the Soviet military mission in Yugoslavia, General N. V. Korneev. The result was discouraging for the Yugoslav side. Djilas recalled:

"Tito presented the problem to Korneev in a very relaxed and polite manner, and therefore we
Very

I was surprised by his rude and insulting refusal. We invited a Soviet general as a comrade and a communist, and he shouted:

- On behalf of the Soviet government, I protest against such slander against the Red Army, which ...

All our attempts to convince him were in vain - we suddenly found ourselves in front of an enraged representative of a great force and an army that "liberates".

During the conversation I said:

- The difficulty also lies in the fact that our opponents use this against us, comparing the attacks of the Red Army with the behavior of British officers, who do not commit such attacks.

Especially rude and not wanting to understand anything, Korneev reacted precisely to this phrase:

"I protest in the strongest terms against the insults inflicted on the Red Army by comparing it with the armies of the capitalist countries!"

Only some time later, the Yugoslav authorities collected data on the iniquities of the Red Army: according to the statements of citizens, there were 121] cases of rape, of which 111 were rapes followed by murder (the number of rapes that were not accompanied by murder was probably much higher, they were simply not reported. - B. S.), and 1204 cases of robbery with damage - the numbers are not so small, if we take into account that the Red Army entered only the north-eastern part of Yugoslavia. These numbers show that

Yugoslav

leadership was obliged to respond to these incidents as a political problem, all the more

serious, that it has also become the subject of an inner-Party struggle. The Communists also felt this problem as a moral one: is this really the ideal Red Army that we have been waiting for with such impatience?

The meeting with Korneev ended inconclusively, although it was noted that after it Soviet headquarters began to react more strictly to the self-will of their fighters.

Djilas tried to raise the same problem with Stalin in Moscow on April 11, 1945, at a banquet on the occasion of the signing of the Soviet-Yugoslav friendship treaty.

And this is what came out of it:

"Stalin considered that the time had come to end the feud with me. He did it in a half-joking way: he poured me a glass of vodka and offered me a drink for the Red Army. I did not immediately understand his intention, I wanted to drink to his health.

"No, no," he insisted, grinning and looking at me searchingly, "precisely for the Red Army!" What, don't you want to drink for the Red Army?

Of course, I drank, although at Stalin I avoided drinking anything other than beer, because I do not like alcohol and because drunkenness did not fit with my views, although I had never been
And
sobriety preacher.

Then Stalin asked - what happened to the Red Army? I explained to him that it was not wanted insult the Red Army, but wanted to point out the mistakes of some of its employees and the political the difficulties it created for us.

Stalin interrupted:

- Yes. You, of course, read Dostoevsky? Have you seen what a complex thing the human soul, human psychology is? Imagine a man who is fighting from Stalingrad to Belgrade - thousands of kilometers across his devastated land, seeing the death of his comrades and most

loved ones! Can such a person react normally? And what's wrong if he fools around with a woman after such horrors? You imagined the Red Army as ideal. And it's not perfect and wouldn't be perfect even if it didn't have a certain percentage.

criminal elements - we opened prisons and took everyone into the army. There was an interesting case here. The major-pilot fooled around with the woman, and there was a knight-engineer who began to protect her. The major for the pistol: "Oh, you rear rat!" - and killed the knight-engineer. Major was sentenced to death. But the matter came to me, I became interested in him and - I have the right to do this as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief during the war - I released the major, sent him to the front. Now he is one of the heroes. The warrior must be understood. And the Red Army is not perfect. It is important that she beat the Germans - and she beats them well - everything else is secondary.

A little later, after returning from Moscow, I was horrified to learn about a much larger degrees

"understanding" by him of the sins of the Red Army. Advancing in East Prussia, Soviet soldiers, especially tankers, crushed and indiscriminately killed German refugees - women and children. This was reported to Stalin, asking him what should be done in such cases. He replied: "We give our fighters too many lectures - let them take the initiative!"

The behavior of Soviet soldiers in Germany and the Europe they liberated was primarily determined by how Stalin and his commanders waged the war. Both soldiers and officers of the Red Army were well aware that a soldier's life is not valued so cheaply in any other army - a participant in the war, that their bodies are paving the way to victory. Having escaped from the borders of their country, they vented their anger both on the prisoners and on the civilian population. They were also angry at what

border, even in poor Serbia, life is still incomparably better than in Soviet "kolkhoz

paradise." And they also robbed because they lived much poorer than the same Americans or British. For Americans, for example, the same bicycles were of no value; in America they

were in great abundance. In the same way, American and British officers and soldiers would not have thought to take German cars home, since they had their own. Therefore, captured vehicles were used only for the needs of the occupation administration. American soldiers, like the Red Army, appreciated German watches, and antiques even more so. And still

it cannot be said that in the western zones of occupation the German population has practically no left

hours, as happened in the Soviet zone. It would never have occurred to an American general to take hundreds of window bolts and dozens of cans of shoe polish

with him, as Lieutenant General V.V. Kryukov, Rokossovsky's longtime combat ally, did. Of course, not everyone succumbed to the "trophy fever" - Rokossovsky himself, for example, was not affected at all. From the war, he brought only two trophies - a good Telefunken radio and a hunting

double-barreled "Sauer".

And Stalin, better than Djilas and anyone else, understood that it would be better to give this spontaneous hatred an outlet to foreigners, primarily, of course, to the Germans, so that this hatred and anger would not break through inside the country. That is why he was condescending towards excesses, and after the war he proclaimed a campaign of struggle against "rootless cosmopolitanism", "foreignness", and "servile worship of the West". Only when it became clear that excesses were corrupting the Red Army, which was rapidly losing combat effectiveness (and it was still needed in the impending Cold War), did Stalin accept

measures to stop the killings, robberies and rapes of the civilian German population,

Although

All this completely stopped only at the end of 1945 - the beginning of 1946.

The first victim of violence by the Red Army was East Prussia. There was especially a lot of violence and murder. There is a lot of

evidence about this. I will give one of them, owned by the artist and writer Leonid Nikolaevich Rabichev, in 1945 - a

lieutenant, commander of a communications platoon in the 31st Army of the 3rd Belorussian Front:

"We remove a dead soldier from the wagon, take out his military ID, tag from his pocket. He must be buried. But first, let's go to the house. Three large rooms, two dead women and three dead girls, all with their skirts pulled up and empty wine bottles sticking upside down between their legs. I walk along the wall of the house, the second door, the corridor, the door and two more adjoining rooms, on each of the beds, and there are three of them, there are dead women with their legs apart and bottles.

Well, suppose they were all raped and shot. The pillows are covered in blood. But where does it come from

sadistic desire to stick bottles? Our infantry, our tankers, village and city guys, everyone in their homeland has families, mothers, sisters.

... Our troops in East Prussia overtook the civilian population evacuating from Goldap, Insterburg and other cities left by the German army. On wagons and cars, on foot

old people, women, children, large patriarchal families slowly went west along all the roads and highways of the country.

Our tankers, infantrymen, artillerymen, signalmen overtook them to clear the way,

they threw their carts with furniture, bags, suitcases, horses into ditches on the sides of the highway, pushed the old people and children aside,
and, forgetting about duty and honor and about the German units retreating without a fight, they attacked women and girls in thousands.

Women, mothers and their daughters, lie to the right and left along the highway, and in front of each stands a cackling armada of men with their trousers down.

Those who are bleeding and losing consciousness are dragged aside, children who rush to help them are shot. Cackle, growl, laughter, cries and groans. And their commanders, their majors

And

colonels stand on the highway, who chuckles, and who conducts - no, rather, regulates. This is so that all their soldiers, without exception, participate. No, not mutual responsibility at all
not revenge
damn occupiers - this hellish deadly group sex.

Permissiveness, impunity, impersonality and cruel logic of the distraught crowds.

Shocked, I sat in the cab of a lorry, my driver Demidov stood in line, and I imagined Flaubert's Carthage, and I understood that the war would not write off

everything. And the colonel, the one
what just

conducted, does not stand up and takes the queue himself, and the major shoots witnesses, hysterical children and old people.

- Finish it! By cars!

And behind is the next unit. And again a stop, and I can't keep my signalers, who are also already getting into new queues, and my telephone operators are choking with laughter, and nausea rises in my throat. To the horizon between the mountains of rags, overturned wagons are the corpses of women, old people, children.

The highway is cleared for traffic. It's getting dark. Left and right are German farms. We receive an order to settle down for the night. This is part of the headquarters of our army: the commander of artillery, air defense, political department. Me and my control platoon get a farm two kilometers from the highway.
In

all rooms are the corpses of children, old people and raped and shot women. We are so tired that, not paying attention to them, we lie down on the floor
between them and fall asleep ...

Illumination comes suddenly. This is not a game and not self-affirmation, this is completely from other dimensions,

this is repentance. Like a splinter, it sits inside not only me, but all my generation, but probably all of humanity. This is a special case, a fragment of the criminal age, and with this, as with

dispossession of the thirties, as with the Gulag, as with the death of tens of millions of innocent people, as with the occupation

of Polypi in 1939 - you cannot live with dignity, without this

no repentance

deserve to die. I was a platoon commander, I felt sick, looked as if from the side, but my soldiers stood in these terrible criminal lines, laughed when they had to burn with shame, and in essence committed crimes against humanity.

Regulator Colonel? Was one command enough? But after all, the commander of the Third Belorussian Front, General of the Army

Chernyakhovsky, also drove along the same highway in his jeep. Did he see it all, did he go into houses where women with

bottles lay on their beds? Was one command enough? So who was more to blame: the soldier from the ranks, the traffic controller

major, the laughing colonels and generals, the one watching me, all those who said that "the war would write everything off"?

In April, my 31st Army was transferred to the First Ukrainian Front in Silesia, in the Danzig direction. On the second day, by

order of Marshal Konev, forty Soviet soldiers and officers were shot in front of the formation, and there was not a single case of rape and murder of civilians in Silesia. Why didn't Army General Chernyakhovsky do the same in East Prussia?

A crazy thought is tormenting me - Stalin calls Chernyakhovsky and whispers to him:

international treaties will be ours, Soviet?" And Chernyakhovsky to Stalin: "It will be done, Comrade General Secretary!"

This is my

fantasy, but it is very similar to the truth. No, I don't have to hide anything, it's right that I write about what I saw with my own eyes. I

shouldn't, "I can't be silent!"

And so it was not only in East Prussia, but also in Pomerania, and actually in Germany. And in Silesia, where Konev's 1st

Ukrainian Front was operating and where, as Rabichev thought, the atrocities were stopped.

On March 6, 1945, the Nizhneselezsky city of Lauben was able to recapture a tank group from the Soviet troops

General Walter Nehring. This was one of the last successes of the German army in World War II. Having visited the city of Nering, he reported to the headquarters of Army Group Center: "There was hatred all around, which was proclaimed in the pamphlets of Ilya Ehrenburg (meaning the title-call of one of Ehrenburg's articles "Kill the German!". - B.S.). The looted houses and the executed townspeople testified to what awaits our people,

strengthening in our minds

the idea of the need to take any measures to secure the fate of Germany.

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels visited the liberated Lauban. As early as March 2, 1945, he wrote in his diary: "Before me lies the order of Marshal Konev to the Soviet troops. Marshal Konev speaks in this order against the robberies carried out by Soviet soldiers on

Eastern

German lands. It contains individual facts that exactly match our data. Soviet soldiers seize, first of all, available in the eastern German regions

reserves

vodka, get drunk to insensibility, put on civilian clothes, a hat or a top hat and ride bicycles to the east. Konev demands that the commanders take the strictest measures against the decay of the Soviet troops. He also points out that arson and robbery can be carried out

only by

order. The characterization he gives to these facts is extremely interesting. It can be seen from it that in fact, in the face of Soviet soldiers, we are dealing with steppe scum. This is confirmed by the reports of atrocities that have come to us from the eastern regions. They are truly terrifying. They cannot even be played separately. First of all, mention should be made of the terrible documents that came from Upper Silesia. In some villages and cities, all women from ten to 70 years old were subjected to countless rapes. It seems that this is done by order from above, since one can see an obvious system in the behavior of the Soviet soldiery. And having visited Lauban, Goebbels noted on March 9: "Our soldiers, having seen the atrocities of the Soviets, do not know any more mercy. They kill Soviet soldiers with shovels and rifle butts. The cruelties that the soldiers are guilty of are indescribable. Terrible evidence of this is visible all along our path.

Stalin, quite possibly, used the spontaneous anger and fury of the Soviet soldiers in political

purposes. He was quite satisfied that, thanks to Soviet atrocities, the Germans fled from East Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania, that is, those territories that after the war were supposed to be transferred to the Soviet Union and Poland and from where the Germans would still have to be evicted.

And

to a large extent this goal was achieved. For example, on May 17, 1939, the population of East Prussia was 2,341,394 people.

After the war, the Soviet authorities deported about 100,000 Germans. All the rest, with the exception of 500 thousand mobilized into the Wehrmacht, became refugees or died during the hostilities. The goal was achieved - the territory of East Prussia was almost completely cleared of the Germans even before the end of the war.

But exactly the same excesses were happening on the territory of the future Soviet zone of occupation of Germany, from where no one seemed to be going to evict the Germans.

Former Red Army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sabik Vogulov (it is possible that this is a pseudonym), who served in the rear automobile unit on the 1st Belorussian Front (which, as we remember, was commanded by Rokossovsky until November 1944) and fled to West Germany after the war, in February 1947 he published the book "In defeated Germany", where he described in detail those violence against the civilian population, whom he became a witness. This book is still little known in our country, so it is worth quoting a few extensive quotations from it.

Here is how Vogulov describes the invasion of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front into Germany in January 1945:

"Like a whirlwind, like a hurricane of revenge, Russian troops broke into German territory. It was truly a fiery and bloody flurry. If earlier on Russian soil, in Poland, generals and officers held back presumptuous and brutalized soldiers, then here no one could do anything - and did not want to do anything. On the contrary, many officers and generals themselves set an example of attitude towards the defeated enemy, leaving the most terrible crimes without investigation and without consequences.

The main motive for this situation was: to let people feel the sweetness of revenge on the enemy for desecrating the Motherland.

And the results showed up quickly: from the eastern borders of Germany to the Oder, from the Baltic to the Carpathians - the entire German territory was engulfed in fires, robberies and violence.

All this was on an exceptional, terrifying scale."

S. Vogulov observed such a picture then in the first occupied German town, almost fully abandoned by residents

“Everything was on fire around the city, hundreds of soldiers, officers, repatriates darted around the city, dragging clothes, shoes, gramophones, radios from their apartments. Thousands of people rummaged through the empty apartments, choosing what they needed for themselves, like in a giant department store.

The signal for the fire was the order of the commander of the troops: to burn down the house from which a woman fired a shot at the passing Russian soldiers from the window on the day of the occupation of the city. She was not found, and the house was set on fire. A day later, the whole city was on fire. From it, the fires spread further and everywhere where the eye reached, the glow of fires from burning villages and cities was visible. And this continued even when the front line was on the Oder and our troops entrenched themselves on its left bank.

Basically, up to the Oder, the entire German population fled to the western side of this river. There were no more than thirty percent of the Germans on the territory occupied by us. These thirty percent paid for all the Nazi atrocities, for the entire Nazi system. These thirty per cent of the population have felt the full effect of the continuous impact on

the brains of a soldier's mass of Ehrenburg's articles aroused by blood, the result of the connivance of Stalin's generals.

From the eastern borders to the Oder, all German burning villages and cities were filled with rear units and lagging combat units, as well as deserters.

And not the front line, but these "brave" comrades of the rear did monstrous deeds in the occupied territory.

Here is the general's office. Here the heads of departments, departments, hospitals, commanders of the rear units, deputy division commanders.

The last events of the day are recounted in an undertone: the deputy for the political part of a separate automobile battalion tells that today, when he went to the park company in the morning, he saw the corpse of a raped German woman, near which were two children, and the girl had

stomach rupture to the genitals.

The colonel, head of the veterinary department, tells how he quartered a veterinary infirmary in one village yesterday and organized a collection point for trophy horses. He felt thirsty, and he goes into the house of the Germans. There is a German woman in the room, from whom he asks in Russian for water. The frightened German woman cannot understand him, and he is angry. Suddenly a German

something dawned
and she invites the colonel to lie down on the bed.

- It is immediately clear that the Russian Ivan has already "taught", - the colonel concludes.) UCH Y

Here is the commander. He wants to slip some ideological basis under all these outrages, to find the hidden meaning of the "triumph of the great revenge", and in the appropriate spirit He describes a series of abuses committed:

— Comrades! I was very interested in one fact. I, like everyone else, thought that it was just an element harmful to us or just an unbridled man-beast. No! Here, in all these cases, lies something else. I go to one house. There are seven German girls in this house and one of them

lies on
bed, silently trembling with sobs. The girls hugged each other and looked at me in fear. I greet them and speak German ... I find out that here, in this house, fifteen of our soldiers spent the night today and they raped this sobbing girl in turn. I ask other girls: "Were you raped?" They answer: "No." The question is, what is this? Why did our soldiers rape only one of the seven girls with such a rich choice? After all, it's just physically disgusting for the second, third to touch this girl. So think carefully about this fact. You will see that this is not an easy atrocity. Here there is

revenge.

This commander was a supporter of Ilya Ehrenburg.

The head of the hospital for the lightly wounded tells that in the place where his hospital is located, there are very few German women left, but there are a lot of lightly wounded. In order to establish some kind of "order", the wounded officers and soldiers arranged tickets and told the German women that ten tickets had been issued for each of them.

"Just imagine, comrades! I learned about this from these same German women; they came to complain that the officers did not keep their word and that instead of ten, twelve came to them,

thirteen people.

<...>

The best part of the officers tried to stop the wild revelry, but to no avail, for no one did not want

listen and do whatever he pleases.

It was felt that a strong, strong army was heading towards decay, that this starts

to cover the advanced units, whose officers managed to transport German women in closed cars even to the Oder bridgehead.

Neither the front command nor the unit commanders literally took any measures.

When desertion from the army reached its limits and when the embittered remnants of the German population began to kill hundreds of unarmed and drunken rapists, when we no longer knew where to quarter suitable reserves, for all the best had been burned by decayed rear services, only then did they run in headquarters, in the political department and interested in counterintelligence.

Everyone finally felt where it was leading and what it threatened. A leaflet by Marshal Zhukov is distributed among the troops with an appeal to soldiers and officers of the army, in which he urged the soldier not to burn houses, not to rape German women, not to damage the equipment of factories and factories

And

qualified all this as sabotage.

— Soldiers! he said in an address. - See that because of the hem of the German girl

You do not

overlooked what the Motherland sent you for!

More and more often among the officers began to hear talk that when such

It is impossible to move further in the political and moral image of a soldier, that we are dishonoring the Red Army by such actions.

Despite this, cases of robberies, violence, and murders of the local population continued. Yes, and how could they not be, when the commandant's offices were staffed

by random people from the reserve, who, having got into the commandants, tried to use their position primarily to improve their

financial situation and the position of their friends.

Among the commandants of that time, there were few such persons who would be able to bring strict order and discipline in their locality.

Here is a characteristic episode: one captain was the assistant to the head of the commandant's office.

One day, return from your regular detours, he says: - Well, comrades, to us

the tank army begins to arrive. These little brothers will give it to the Germans, just hold on! And already started

give! Yesterday I had to detain one tank commander, senior lieutenant, Hero of the Soviet Union. He received the title of hero for destroying thirty German tanks in battle. Of these, eleven pieces are "tigers". When the Germans were in Ukraine, they destroyed

all of it

family and all relatives in a total of up to forty people, and his father, brothers and sisters were hanged. So this senior lieutenant put his tank near a German house and

went into the house. He brought with him a snack, a drink, and after he treated the owner with the hostess and their three daughters with vodka and a good snack, he

himself got pretty tipsy, raped three girls in turn, after which he took them out into the yard and shot them with a pistol near his tank. Well, what would you do to this person

if you were me? Personally, after listening to this tanker, I shook his hand and let him go. This is really the victim's revenge.

Unfortunately, there were countless such "heroes" and they were given the right to personify the "people's revenge" on enemy territories.

There was a continuous streak of unauthorized reprisals against the local population and a wave of wild lynching with individual representatives of this population, drunken deserters and rear "heroes", lovers of human blood.

Among the healthy mass of soldiers and officers, more and more often, conversations began to be heard that did not approve of this bacchanalia, and it was

clear to all of us that our troops were almost completely decomposed, that in such a situation it was difficult to talk about the development of further

offensive operations, that we we cannot now make the last leap and capture the German capital.

It has already been clearly said here that in such a state of discipline and demoralization of the troops nothing and

think about this jump.

Gradually expanding the Oder bridgehead, our troops begin to recover from internal decay. Already with a firm hand they begin to impose discipline.

Still, Stalin, I think, postponed the capture of Berlin in February for reasons of big politics, and not because he feared that the internally disintegrated Soviet troops would not be able to capture the German capital. Otherwise, he would have issued his directive on changing attitudes towards the German population not on April 2, 1945, when the Soviet armies were already close to Berlin, but much earlier.

I think that S. Vogulov and other eyewitnesses and researchers who believe that the calls of Ilya Ehrenburg were one of the main reasons for the wave of violence that the Red Army brought to Europe are, voluntarily or involuntarily, mistaken. Ehrenburg called for "killing a German", but he never called for killing a Hungarian (although Hungary was an ally of Germany) and even less killing a Serb. But both the Hungarian and the Serbian population got the full from the Red Army.

S. Vogulov paints an impressive picture of the disintegration of Soviet troops in Germany in the first post-war months:
"Senior officers paid more attention to commercial operations than to working with people. Discipline in the troops again fell sharply. Things got to the point that one group from the communications regiment stole a car from the commander of the troops and rolled it around, carrying out armed robberies.

Such a picture of decay and a repeated, sharp fall in discipline was everywhere, throughout the entire zone of occupation. The command of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany started up and became
urge the commanders of the armies to put things in order.

Here is one of the characteristic documents: "To all commanders

At the same time, I am enclosing extracts from the letters of the Germans, made by our censorship. Think carefully where this leads, and make sure that the Germans do not complain about us.

Zhukov".
And on four printed pages of the extract. They are humanly creepy.

1. Dear children! We had nothing left, Russian soldiers came and took everything from us. There is nothing to eat.

We don't know if we'll ever make it to winter or not...

2. Hitler and Goebbels turned out to be really right in one thing, this is in relation to the Russian communists. Even our German communists have seen enough of their Russian brethren and are beginning to hate them.

3. Dear son! We are healthy, but for how long we do not know. Everything is very bad right now. Russian officers solder our girls with vodka, alcohol, take them to their cars and arrange orgies with them. In the evening it is simply impossible to go outside, although they often rob during the day, right on the street. We are being watched and sold by our own people, and it is hard to believe that we Germans, who not so long ago were respected by the whole world, have fallen so low now and been so despised. Many of our young people see no way out and commit suicide.

And so everything is in this spirit. It is terrible to read these documents of people whom Hitler led to a catastrophe and who cannot be now not only in tomorrow, but also in today.

After this letter, Zhukov begins to work with the prosecutor's office. Almost every day, orders are announced for the troops with sentences of a military tribunal. Either officers or soldiers raped German women there, or some lieutenant walked along the highway, stopped a German car and, having killed the driver, disappeared. For two months, at least thirty such orders, but these are random people. A special order is issued demanding the best work of the prosecutor and other bodies that reveal an immoral attitude towards the German population.

But all this is in vain! In vain! For the officer corps is decomposed, there are many criminal elements in the troops, with full knowledge of their criminal profession, using the uniform of the occupying army.

Unrestrained debauchery seized the Russian occupation troops. The command is concerned about the unprecedented growth of venereal diseases and every month from three to five orders devotes to this issue ...

The growth of prostitution among the German population is facilitated by the extremely difficult situation with food, because the supply of the German population is extremely poorly delivered. As a rule, cards are almost never redeemed in the norm for which they were issued. This is mainly

refers to fats, meat, marmalade, sugar.

The satiated lechers are no longer content with German women and girls; child prostitution is on the rise.

Here in front of you is the driver of the car of the head of the procurement department. This boss

—
communist; in the past - an employee of the NKVD, and now, having profited from the war, he achieved demobilization.

His driver boasts to his comrades and even to some officers that

now he has a 12-13 year old girl in every city. This geek with rapture
rolling off
eye pleasures, grunts:

- You understand, friends, not a single hair! And before the war, this
bastard was the director of rural clubs in Ukraine.

In a word, the picture was approximately the same in all Soviet fronts that invaded Germany, whether on the 3rd Belorussian in East Prussia, on the 2nd
Belorussian in East Prussia and Pomerania, on the 1st Belorussian in Brandenburg or on the 1st Belarussian in Silesia.

Of course, robberies, rapes, and murders were committed in Germany by the troops of the Western Allies. According to German evidence, the French
were especially distinguished in this regard. But the scale of robberies and violence with the Red Army was not comparable. Here is what S. Vogulov writes, who
in the first post-war weeks had to visit the territory of Germany occupied by the Americans, which was to be transferred to the Soviet occupation zone, on
official business:

"Where the Red Army passed, you will not see a whole door, a whole wardrobe, a whole desk in any apartment. They are all opened, broken
open with a bayonet, a
crowbar and a heel ...

Emergency task. The Allies liberate territory to be occupied by Soviet troops. It is necessary to reveal within a day what our

allies."

In the local commandant's office, which had just been abandoned by the Americans, S. Vogulova was met by "a whole line of complainers from
among
the inhabitants of the city. Most of them came with a statement that Russian officers had taken away their cars and bicycles. Came already crying

girls

complaining of outrages. Many have already stolen something and someone has already been raped ...

I am told how one commander of the NY division, having learned that there was a chrome leather factory in the city, immediately rushed to this factory and loaded his car with chrome to failure, after which he put his guards at the factory, forbidding the owner of the factory to do anything from given chromium.

They told me: "You are forcing us to set the enterprise in motion, but how can they be launched with the methods that, for example, were used by our general at a chrome factory. After all, the Americans did everything differently. If any American needed a leather suit, then a representative of this factory was called here, measurements were taken from the officer, and in two or three days he received the suit he wanted. We, by such actions, only freeze the industry and the initiative of the industrialists.

The German population, seeing this, began to quickly hide their supplies. During this short trip, I saw that the German population, which was under American occupation, was not plundered, nor was it morally humiliated. None of the Germans I met could name a single anti-moral act of the American troops, no one expressed a single grudge against the Americans. Only in big cities complained about the exceptional lack of food.

Me

I was struck by the great abundance of German cars and motorcycles in the zone of American occupation. In

in all the apartments of the Germans I saw excellent radios; all this was already a rarity in the Soviet zone, and soon became a rarity in this zone, which the Americans liberated for us.

A month after the occupation of this zone, everything left from the Americans was absorbed by the trophy organs, as a result of which nothing was left in the factories and plants.

The soldiers of the armies entering the front also sinned with violence, robberies and murders.

Rokossovsky.

So, according to the testimonies of the survivors, on January 19, 1945, Soviet tanks of the 5th Guards Tank Army intercepted a convoy of refugees and killed people heading towards Frisches Huff Bay.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who served in the 48th Army of the 1st Belorussian Front as commander

sound pickup battery, recalled: "Gree weeks already the war was going on in Germany, and we all knew very well: if the girls were German, they could be raped, then shot, and this would be almost a military difference; if they turned out to be Poles or our stolen Russians, they could in any case be driven naked around the garden and slapped on the thighs - a funny joke, nothing more.

And in the play "The Feast of the Victors", which reflected the violence perpetrated by the Red Army in East Prussia, Alexander Isaevich also mentioned his commander:

Is your Rokossovsky yesterday

There was also a prisoner.

Not a human,

In Siberia, somewhere in the forest fall

Either he sawed trunks, or he loaded them onto barges,
Today he was called, needed, marshal, -

And tomorrow, perhaps, again he will go to the taiga?

However, the fear of "returning to the taiga" (more precisely, to the "Crosses"), if it existed at all with the marshal, did not prevent Rokossovsky from taking measures to combat the excesses that spread dangerously among his subordinates.

The English publicist Anthony Beevor writes in his book:

"The playwright Zakhar Agranenko, who fought in East Prussia as part of a marine unit, wrote in his diary that Soviet soldiers did not believe that German women would voluntarily enter into individual intimate contacts with them. Therefore, the Red Army men raped them collectively - nine, ten, twelve people per woman. Later, he told how the Germans themselves began to offer themselves to the marines, fearing

for my
LIFE...

Even twelve-year-old teenagers could become raped. The NKVD information from the 43rd Army contained information about German women from Spalaiten who tried to commit suicide. A certain Emma Korn was interrogated, who told the following: "Parts of the Red Army entered the city on February 3rd. When the Soviet soldiers descended into the basement where the locals were hiding, they pointed their machine guns at me and two other women and ordered

go upstairs.

Here, twelve soldiers took turns raping me. Other soldiers raped two more women. At night, six more drunken soldiers descended into the basement and raped us in front of other women. On February 5, three soldiers came, and on February 6, eight drunken soldiers, who also

raped and beat us." Three days later, this woman attempted to kill her children and commit suicide. The attempt failed. Apparently Emma Korn didn't know how.

This
being done...

Calls to avenge the Fatherland, which was attacked by the Wehrmacht, were understood as permission to show cruelty. Even young women, soldiers and paramedics did not oppose. A twenty-year-old girl from the reconnaissance detachment Agranenko said: "Our soldiers behave

with
Germans, especially with German women, absolutely right." to someone it seemed

curious. So, some Germans remember that Soviet women watched how they were raped and laughed. But some were deeply shocked by what they saw in Germany.

Natalia Hesse, a close friend of the scientist Andrei Sakharov, was a war correspondent. She later recalled: "Russian soldiers raped all German women between the ages of 8 and 80. It was an army of rapists."

The topic of the mass atrocities of the Red Army in Germany has been banned in Russia for so long that even now veterans deny that they took place. Only a few spoke about it openly, but without any regrets. The commander of the tank unit recalled: "They all lifted their skirts and lay down on the bed." He even boasted that "two million of our children were born in Germany"...

Marshal Rokossovsky issued order No. 006, which stated that the feeling
hatred for

the enemy should only appear during combat. The order provided for the punishment of soldiers for robbery, theft, violence against the local population, senseless arson and destruction of buildings. However, it seems that this order did not achieve the desired effect. They did, however,

attempts to bring

order. There were stories that a certain division commander personally shot a lieutenant who raped a German woman along with his soldiers. However, in most cases, it was very difficult for the authorities to restore order in their own units, and among the drunken

soldiers
armed with automatic weapons are simply dangerous.

Even General Okorokov, head of the political department of the 2nd Belorussian Front, spoke out on February 6 against what he called "the refusal to take revenge on one's enemies." In Moscow, however, they cared more about preventing senseless destruction than violence. On February 9, Krasnaya Zvezda wrote that any violation of discipline only weakens the victorious Red Army, revenge should not be blind, and anger should not be unreasonable. Further in the newspaper

article
it was said that soldiers in blind anger can destroy this or that production, which is very valuable for the Red Army.

Politicians at the front tried to take a similar approach to the problem of rape. If the soldiers are properly educated, it was said in the documents of the political department of the 19th army (which was part of the 2nd Belorussian Front. - B.S.), then they simply do not want to have sexual relations with German women. Soldiers will be disgusted by them. However, such sophistry only complicated the matter, drove the problem into a dead end. Even Soviet women in the army did not condemn male soldiers. "The behavior of our soldiers towards the Germans, especially German women, is completely correct," said a 21-year-old girl from Agranenko's intelligence unit. And according to Kopelev, one of his assistants in the political department even somehow joked about the cases of rape of German women, which caused natural irritation in this

writer.

There is no doubt that the crimes committed by the German troops in the occupied territory of the Soviet Union, as well as specific political propaganda, contributed to the fact that a wave of horrific rapes of women swept through East Prussia. But revenge is

this is only part of the explanation. If the soldiers were drunk, then they had no values the nationality of their prey. Lev Kopelev recalled that, while in Allenstein, he suddenly heard a piercing cry. Then I saw a young girl running away from two drunken Soviet

tankers. She shouted: "I'm Polish! Holy Mary, I'm Polish!"...

The main motive for rape was still drunkenness. They drank everything, including various chemicals from laboratories. Is the fact that

permanent
drunkenness weakened the combat capabilities of the Red Army. The situation has become so critical

that the NKVD authorities were forced to report to Moscow about mass cases of alcohol poisoning seized in the occupied territory of Germany. Many women raped by drunks

soldiers, turned out to be mutilated for life. It may seem that the Red Army simply needed to get drunk in order to rape a woman, but sometimes they got so drunk that they could not even complete sexual intercourse.

It seems that the matter was not only and not so much in drunkenness. The Red Army drank a lot

Always. Of course, the trophy stocks of alcohol and alcohol in Germany contributed to the fact that drinking

became more. A theory was even born in the Soviet political agencies that the Germans, they say, deliberately leave stocks of alcohol, including poisonous methyl alcohol, and alcohol in the territories occupied by the Red Army in order to solder and poison the Red Army. In reality, everything was much simpler. The German command first of all evacuated troops, the wounded and refugees, and from the warehouses - ammunition, fuel and food. They simply didn't get their hands on alcohol, especially since, due to the rapid advance of the Soviet troops, they didn't always have time to take out even the wounded and refugees.

But the Red Army soldiers did not kill and rape because they were drunk. Rather, on the contrary, before committing a crime, they drank

"for courage." Crimes were not committed

because of

drunkenness, but out of a sense of revenge and hatred for the surrounding world, which opened up to the Soviet people in Europe, so prosperous and arranged, while they are driven to death every day, and burnt cities and villages remain in their homeland, where there has never been such a well-fed life as in the same East Prussia.

By the way, the episode in Allenstein, which struck Lev Kopelev so much, when he saw a Polish girl running away from two Red Army soldiers, is also captured in Solzhenitsyn's poem "Prussian

nights":

Somewhere right there, from behind the wall, a girl's cry is heard only: "I'm not a German! I'm not German!

I'm Polish. I'm Polish..."

In the order of the military council of the 2nd Belorussian Front No. 006 dated 22

January 1945,

with which it was required to familiarize all command personnel up to and including platoon commanders, it was alleged that the seizure of large stocks of alcohol tempted the soldiers to "excessive alcohol consumption", and, along with "robbery, looting, arson" - the murders were silent - now everywhere there is mass drunkenness, in which even officers participate. As an example, the 290th Rifle Division was cited, where the soldiers and officers got drunk to such an extent that they "lost the appearance of a Red Army soldier." Rokossovsky resented the fact that the tanks carried wine barrels and the ammunition trucks were so loaded with "all sorts of household items, captured food, civilian clothing, etc." that they became a burden on the troops, limiting their freedom of movement and reducing the strength of tank formations. Rokossovsky demanded "to burn out these shameful phenomena for the Red Army with a red-hot iron", to bring to

responsibility

guilty of robbery and drunkenness and punish them up to execution, to establish "in the shortest possible time exemplary order and iron discipline" in all military units. Rokossovsky also condemned the killings of prisoners, although he did not directly mention them. He only recalled that "the enemy must be destroyed in battle, and those who surrender must be taken prisoner."

Particular emphasis in the order was placed on the preservation of material values. Head of Logistics and

The quartermaster of the front received a special order: "to take all measures to identify and preserve trophy property", to stop its "plunder and sale to the side."

In pursuance of this order, the military prosecutor of the 48th Army, Lieutenant Colonel of Justice Malyarov, on January 23, 1945, issued an order

to the military prosecutor of the 194th Infantry Division, in which he clearly condemned the atrocities against the civilian population and prisoners of war.

Malyarov drew attention to the facts of the use of weapons by military personnel "to the German population, in particular, to women and

the elderly" and to "numerous facts of the execution of prisoners of war" for no reason, just out of "mischief." He instructed the military prosecutors,

together with the political apparatus, to explain to the army servicemen that the destruction of seized property, "arson of settlements" is an anti-

state affair and that the Red Army should not crack down on the civilian population, that it is criminal to use weapons against women and the

elderly for such actions. from now on they will be severely punished. Malyarov emphasized that German soldiers should be taken prisoner, as this would weaken the enemy's resistance. Military

prosecutors were instructed to immediately organize several "show trials" over

"malicious arsonists" and looters (but not murderers or rapists), declaring in the troops
about the verdicts.

In The Feast of the Winners, Solzhenitsyn parodies Rokossovsky's order No. 006 ("Top-secret Order on the front. Zero-zero-seven") in this way:

When entering the territory of East Prussian Seen in parts of
the Second Belorussian,

Both in settlements and along roads, Occurring with the
allowance of officers So far, isolated cases - arson,

Murder, violence, robbery and looting.

All commanding, all commanding staff Is charged with a duty, given
the right

In parts of one's own, as well as those of others, without making a division,
To maintain military Soviet honor, Such actions should be
stopped on the spot

By any means up to and including execution.

Further, the author describes the bewildered reaction of the officers to the marshal's order:

Nerzhin (whistles)

Strongly! But what about the instruction of the Political Department
About ours about sacred revenge?

How about parcels? And battery notebooks

Under the heading "Russian account to the enemy"?

Maikov

Ba-fathers! Tell me, for God's sake - So I can
throw out Glafirkin's convoy?

Nerzhin

That's great! Ivan was lured

Ivan was promised, Ivan was set,

While he was needed to stomp to the Baltic ...

To

The soldier with whom I was lying in the swamps of Lake Ilmen, the soldier with whom the single-engine Junkers pecked at us at point-blank range - Should we shoot him? For taking the Moser cups? And even if - what dragged the girl into the bunker? Saying goodbye to life there, in the Oryol rye,

In scorched smells, in smoke, I pressed him to the ground - not ours, maybe, lie down! lie down!

And now I will raise my hand to him?

You before the onset isn't it immutable

Did the order justify the opposite?

Of course, with such sentiments both among the officers and, to an even greater extent, among the rank and file of the Red Army, Rokossovsky's order, like similar orders from other front commanders, demanding an end to robberies, violence and murders and threatening the most severe punishments, up to execution on the spot, largely remained on paper. Mutual responsibility reigned among the servicemen, and the commanders in every way shielded their subordinates, accused of crimes against the Germans. But what matters here is the intention itself. Rokossovsky first

from

commanders issued an order demanding an end to violence against the civilian German population.

And this is not at all accidental. Konstantin Konstantinovich was always scrupulous about issues of military honor. He was very hurt that his subordinates committed crimes against prisoners of war and civilians. Rokossovsky always strove to behave like a knight and believed that it was impossible to take revenge on a defeated enemy. Only now his generals, officers and soldiers are very

often did not behave like knights. For example, General K.F. Telegin, with whom they traveled together from Stalingrad to the Vistula, later in Germany fell ill with "trophy fever" and whole wagons

drove furniture and other property to the USSR. When he was arrested in the Zhukov case, ^{illegal} appropriation of trophy property became one of the charges.

E. Beevor cites the following characteristic episode: "On April 10, 1945, Pyotr Mitrofanovich Sebelev, who became a lieutenant colonel at only twenty-two, wrote home that an unusual and therefore frightening silence had been established at the front ... And just two hours before he took to write a letter, scouts brought a captured German corporal to him. That right away

asked: "Where am I, mister officer? In the troops of Zhukov or in the gang of Rokossovsky?" Sebelev laughed and told the German that he was in the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, commanded by Marshal Zhukov. But he was very interested in why the captive corporal called the units of Marshal Rokossovsky a "gang". The German replied: "They do not follow the rules of war, that is why the German soldiers call them a gang."

Obviously, Rokossovsky's armies had a bad reputation in terms of reprisals against prisoners. However, in Zhukov's troops, things were no better with this. This is evidenced, in particular, by S. Vogulov: "... In the Russian army, it was a common occurrence for the execution of captured Germans by escorts and" militant "rear guards ... And after that, no order, no punishment. Can

give dozens of such examples, when some furious regimental commander personally shot hundreds of prisoners, just because some stray bullet killed his field wife. In this last operation (offensive on Berlin. - B.S.), the attitude towards the surrendering enemy

Same paid attention and strictly forbade the execution of prisoners. But it was too late: the German army surrendered to the allies, and on our sector of the front it fought to the death."

The regimental commander who personally shoots hundreds of prisoners is undoubtedly a poetic exaggeration. Even the professional Yezhov-Beria executioners, who, as they say, were skilled in their craft, shot several dozen at most every day. For example, 14.7 thousand Polish officers in 1940 were shot for about 45 days in three places, so that for each execution point, on average, there were a little less than 100

man and this despite the fact that in each item there were several performers. But indeed, all orders not to shoot prisoners in the Red Army remained an empty phrase, since no one and never been punished for the execution of prisoners.

Solzhenitsyn in the poem "Prussian Nights", which later became the chapter of the story in verse "Dorozhenka", described the pictures of the epic-crazy robbery:

Someone knocked out the door to Saz az
And from there the piano rushed.

Doesn't fit in the door. And with delight Beats the strings
with a shovel:

"Oh, you utensil! So we

Can't get it, fighters? "I won't leave
the military department,
Quartermasters and headquarters!"

Further, the author describes the execution of a young German woman, feeling guilty for him:

Looked back -

Understood! —

She screamed, fell into the snow

And she froze,

Like a motionless animal, yellow ... The
machine has not yet clicked

Mig, another.

Why did I wave my hand?

My God!

"Car, stop!

HEY, guys! ..

"Automatic machines - the queue. And in places...

Only on April 20, 1945, the directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command "On
changing the attitude towards
German prisoners of war and the civilian population" was issued. It was addressed to the commanders of the 1st
Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts, but in fact became

guide to action on all fronts. This directive read:

"The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command orders:

1. Demand a change in attitude towards the Germans, both prisoners of war and civilians. It's better to deal with the
Germans. The harsh treatment of the Germans makes them afraid and makes them

stubbornly resist without surrendering. The civilian population, fearing revenge, organizes itself into gangs. Such a
situation is
unfavorable for us. A more humane attitude towards the Germans will make it easier for us to conduct military
operations on
their territory and, undoubtedly, will reduce the stubbornness of the Germans in defense.

2. In the regions of Germany to the west of the line, the mouth of the Oder River, Furstenberg, then the Neisse River
(to the
west), to create German administrations, and to put burgomasters - Germans in the cities. Ordinary members of the
National
Socialist Party, if they are loyal to

The Red Army, do not touch, but only detain the leaders if they did not have time to escape.

3. Improving attitudes towards the Germans should not lead to a decrease in vigilance and familiarity with the Germans.

It is significant that this directive concerned only the territory that, after the end of the war, was supposed to be left as part of Germany. It turned out that in East and West Prussia and in Pomerania, where the troops of the 2nd and 3rd Belorussian fronts were operating, it was still possible to commit violence against the civilian population - thereby prompting them to quickly "clear" the territories that retreated to the Soviet Union and Poland.

Rokossovsky, of course, could not cope with the element of violence that swept the Soviet troops in Europe. But any other front commander or army commander could not cope with it either. These were the inevitable consequences of the "war of extermination" waged on the Soviet-German front by both sides. The Marshal must have been very upset by what he saw in Germany in 1945, but he never shared what he saw with any of his relatives or friends. Acted very hard

memory censorship.

Chapter Thirteen AGAIN IN POLAND

After the surrender of Germany, Stalin entrusted Rokossovsky to command the Victory Parade. The parade was hosted by Marshal Zhukov. This issue was resolved at Stalin's meetings with the front commanders on May 23 and 25. And between these meetings there was a solemn reception on May 24 in the Kremlin in honor of the commanders of the Red Army, at which Stalin delivered his famous toast

O

Russian people. There were many other interesting toasts, forty-one in all. IN quality

toastmasters were Molotov. When the turn came to the commanders of the fronts, the first toast he

proposed for Zhukov, whom he called "the liberator of Warsaw", noting his role in the defense of Moscow and Leningrad. And he added to applause:

"Everyone remembers that under the leadership of Marshal Zhukov, our troops entered Berlin victoriously. To Marshal Zhukov's health!"

This was

followed by Stalin's toast: "Down with Hitler's Berlin! Long live Berlin Zhukovsky!"

Probably, Rokossovsky was a little insulting to hear these toasts - after all, in fairness, at the head of the 1st Belorussian Front, he would have to liberate Warsaw and take

Berlin. The second of the commanders of the fronts was awarded the toast to Konev. Molotov noted that Konev "smashed the Germans in Ukraine", "liberated the Czechoslovak capital of Prague with his troops", stressed that "his troops, together with the troops of Marshal Zhukov, took Berlin.

The third toast was made to Rokossovsky. Molotov said: "I raise a toast to Marshal Rokossovsky, commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front, whom we know from the battles of Stalingrad, who made a historical turn in our war, who liberated Danzig from German fascists and took the city of Stettin, one of the largest cities in Northern Germany".

And here is how the famous final Stalinist toast sounded in the transcript, and not in newspaper report:

"Comrades, allow me to raise one more, last toast.

I, as a representative of our Soviet government, would like to raise a toast to the health of our Soviet people and, above all, the Russian people. (Stormy, prolonged applause, shouts of 'Hurrah'.)

I drink, first of all, to the health of the Russian people, because they are the most outstanding nation of all the nations that make up the Soviet Union.

I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people because in this war they deserved and previously deserved the title, if you will, of the leading force of our Soviet Union among all the peoples of our country.

I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people not only because they are the leading people, but also because they have common sense, general political common sense and patience.

Our government made many mistakes, we had moments of desperate situation
V

1941-1942, when our army retreated, left our native villages and cities in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Leningrad region, the Karelian-Finnish Republic, left because there was no other way out. Some other people could say: you have not justified our hopes, we will put in another government that will make peace with Germany and provide us

peace. It
could happen, mind you.

But the Russian people did not agree to this, the Russian people did not compromise, they showed boundless confidence in our government. I repeat, we made mistakes, for the first two years our army was forced to retreat, it turned out that they did not master the events, did not cope with the situation that had arisen. However, the Russian people believed, endured, waited and hoped that we would
deal with events.

For this trust in our government, which the Russian people have shown us, we thank him very much! For the health of the Russian people! (Stormy, long unceasing applause.)

Probably, at these moments Rokossovsky felt like a Russian, not yet knowing that he would soon have to remember his Polish nationality.

Before the Victory Parade, important events took place in the life of Rokossovsky. June 1, 1945 Rokossovsky "For the exemplary performance of combat missions of the Supreme High Command for the management of operations on the front against the German invaders in the region of Pomerania and

Mecklenburg and the successes achieved as a result of these operations "was awarded the title twice Hero of the Soviet Union. And on June 10, the field administration of the 2nd Belorussian Front was transformed into the administration of the Northern Group of Forces stationed in Poland. Rokossovsky became its commander and placed his headquarters in Legnica.

Now Rokossovsky had more time to be with his family. In his free time, the marshal fiddled in the beds in the garden, they saw him both on the tennis court and on the volleyball court. He also rode a lot and willingly, but he never learned to drive a car. And I read a lot in the evenings.

Rokossovsky was recognized by the whole world. His portraits were published in American, British, French newspapers. And the marshal had unexpected admirers. One of them was a young English woman

Mitzi Price, who lived near London. In February 1945, she wrote a letter to Rokossovsky,

which she admitted that, judging by the photo, he is very similar to her friend who died in the war. After that, she regularly congratulated the marshal on Christmas, Easter, and also on Valentine's Day. Mitzi collected photographs and materials dedicated to Rokossovsky, hanging them in a corner

your

living room. Konstantin Konstantinovich kept the letters and photographs sent by her, but neither on one did not answer.

The fact that Stalin appointed Rokossovsky to command the Victory Parade, as it were, put Konstantin Konstantinovich in second place in the Soviet military hierarchy after Zhukov. True, one thing must be taken into account here. The third front commander in the Berlin operation, Marshal Konev, who began in the tsarist army as an artilleryman, rode a horse poorly and could not command the parade. By the way, after the war, Zhukov, Rokossovsky and Konev commanded the three most powerful groups of Soviet troops in Europe - in Germany, Poland and Austria. And the fact that the toast on May 24 to Konev was proclaimed second after Zhukov seemed to even indicate that he was considered second in the military hierarchy. But, in any case, Rokossovsky undoubtedly remained one of the most honored and trusted marshals of Stalin.

The grandson of Marshal Konstantin Vilyevich, according to his mother, said:

"After the war, grandfather became the commander-in-chief of the Northern Group of Forces and remained to live in the Polish

city of Legnica. He arrived in Moscow with his mother shortly before the Victory Parade. Grandmother stayed in Poland to settle down in a new place.

It was raining on the day of the parade. grandfather not could

hide under a canopy - he was with the troops, and when he arrived home, it was impossible to take off his soaking wet parade uniform from him. Mom had to take

scissors and cut the uniform at the seams.

And in the evening guests came - grandfather's military friends. Our housekeeper prepared everything and went to her room. Grandfather came for her and called to

the table. She remembered until the end of her life how noted

victory with the generals. In general, grandfather always behaved with everyone as an equal with an equal: with soldiers, with neighbor boys, with drivers.

On June 25, Stalin gave a reception in the Kremlin in honor of the participants in the Victory Parade. Here he made another of his famous toasts - about people-"cogs":

"Don't think I'm going to say anything out of the ordinary. I have the simplest, most ordinary toast. I would like to drink to the health of people who have few ranks and an

unenviable title. For people who are considered "cogs" of the great state mechanism, but without whom we are all marshals and commanders of fronts and armies,

to put it bluntly, we are not worth a damn thing. Any

The "screw"

went wrong - and it's over. I raise a toast to simple, ordinary, modest people, to the "cogs" that keep our great state mechanism in a state of activity in all branches of science, economy and military affairs. There are a lot of them, their name is legion, because they are tens of millions of people. These are humble people. No one writes anything about them, they have no title, few ranks, but these are the people who hold us like the foundation holds the top. I drink to the health of these people, our respected comrades."

I think that Rokossovsky and other commanders who were present at this reception perfectly understood the Stalinist toast: they are just cogs in a huge state machine, which, if desired, is not at all difficult to replace. Rokossovsky still perfectly remembered this from 1937, when, shortly before his arrest, he and other high-ranking commanders were instructed to prepare for themselves

changes.

On June 26, Rokossovsky, for the last time in the victorious 1945, was at a reception with Stalin. After that, Konstantin Konstantinovich appeared in the leader's Kremlin office only five years later, in 1950. However, in fact, the marshal and the generalissimo had met before, in the second half of the 1940s. The fact is that after the war, Stalin received visitors more often and held meetings not in the Kremlin office, but at his Near Dacha, where no registration of visitors was conducted.

So, almost certainly Rokossovsky was at Stalin's reception in front of the Supreme Military Council, which took place on June 1, 1946. The Council adopted a decision prepared by Stalin on withdrawal

Marshal Zhukov from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces and his appointment as Commander of the Odessa Military District.

Zhukov was accused of arrogance and the desire to ascribe to himself all the victories in the Great Patriotic War.

So far, we know about Rokossovsky's speech at the Supreme Military Council only in the presentation

Marshal Konev. Ivan Stepanovich spoke to the writer Konstantin Simonov about Rokossovsky's speech:

"He spoke eloquently. I felt in his words resentment at the fact that at one time

Zhukov moved,
replaced him on the 1st Belorussian Front, and he had to move to a secondary - 2nd Belorussian Front. Although, of course, from the point of view of the scale of the front commanders, these, in my opinion, are incommensurable values, and this was done correctly. In his own memoirs, Konev claimed that Rokossovsky "very diplomatically ... noted that he did not share the accusations against Zhukov that he was a politically dangerous person, a dishonest communist." There was no former friendship between Zhukov and Rokossovsky for a long time, which was facilitated by both the difference in characters and the intolerance of Georgy Konstantinovich towards anyone who could claim his place

"commander number one."

The situation in Poland, where the Northern Group of Soviet Forces was located, was far from simple. Not everyone was friendly towards the Red Army and attempts to "Sovietize" the country. Difficulties also arose in connection with the eviction of the German population from the territories of the Reich that had gone to Poland, and with the settlement of new Polish lands by people from the Polish eastern provinces that had gone to the Soviet Union. The following document gives a good idea of this.

On December 15, 1945, the Soviet consulate in Gdansk reported to Moscow:

"By the time the Red Army units arrived in Gdansk, in Gdynia and other cities of the voivodeship, there were a small number of Poles compared to the German population.

Due to their small number, the Poles almost did not suffer from excesses, but later, as the Polish population grew, the number of cases also increased when Poles also became victims of excesses on the part of individual decomposed soldiers and officers. Although the marauders are being punished, nevertheless, the Poles continue to hold the Red Army responsible for the actions of these individuals.

For the period from July to December, Smersh authorities registered 222 excesses. Of this

half of the cases - looting.

Recently there have been such cases:

1) Officer Solovyov took the horse from the Pole. 2) In the port of Gdansk, in a restaurant, an English sailor invited our fighters to drink. When it came to kissing, one of the soldiers

contrived to take a notebook out of the Englishman's inner pocket. The Poles, who observed this picture, informed the Englishman. He was outraged, called the soldiers all sorts of obscene words, and then opened fire on them. 3) An outrageous incident occurred at the railway station in Gdynia. A soldier stole a suitcase from a Polish woman. The woman made a fuss and demanded the suitcase back. More than 100 Poles gathered for the scandal. As a result, the suitcase was taken away, and the soldier was beaten. 4) In the port of Gdansk, 4 drunken sailors broke into a Norwegian ship and smashed 2 windows with hammers, beat off the paint from the side, cursed the Norwegians and left. 5) At the end of November, the Burgomaster Mr. Praust was returning home. The three fighters he caught up with asked for a ride. The burgomaster freed the carriage and ordered the coachman to take it. On the way, the soldiers killed the coachman, took some things, and buried the corpse. The killer has just been discovered.

Such cases reach the broad masses of the population, sometimes this or that case is presented to him in a perverted form. We must also not forget that sometimes the looting and hooliganism of Polish soldiers is attributed to our fighters. So one day falls

some
excesses.

Along with the fact that at rallies, in government and party circles, the role of the USSR in the liberation of Poland and the importance of Polish-Soviet friendship are emphasized in every possible way, there is dissatisfaction of some part of the population with the fact that Red Army units are on Polish territory. The reasons for this situation are:

1. The absence of a decisive struggle against such phenomena. On the contrary, part of the officers tends to hide from the Command cases of looting and hooliganism on the part of her subordinates.

2. The presence of a large number of teams that are in the subsidiary farms of military parts. These teams, consisting only of the rank and file, are left to their own devices. These teams do a lot of ugliness.

3. A large number of demobilized and vacationers are moving through the voivodeship, often in alone. Excesses are arranged along the way.

4. Deserters touring on fictitious travel certificates.

One can hear statements that real Polish-Soviet friendship will become possible only

when the Red Army leaves Poland. This part of the population is unfriendly to soldiers and officers.

Another fact for inciting the discontent of the Poles towards the Soviet Union and the Red Army is the export of industrial and port equipment. Especially

the Poles are unhappy
export

parts of the equipment of the Danzig shipyards. They declare that the goal of their struggle for Danzig was the shipyard "Schichau" with its slipways and powerful cranes. Immediately after the entry of our troops into Danzig, the Poles hung their flag on the most powerful, 250-ton crane of the Schiehau shipyard. After some time, our sailors shot off the entire white part of the flag from machine guns, leaving only the red part, that is, turning the Polish flag into a Soviet one. This

caused a strong

irritation among the Poles.

The new Polish authorities did not enjoy authority among the population and created even more excesses than the Soviet soldiers. The same report stated:

"According to the Poles themselves, most members of the government are unknown to the wide layers

population. They do not know Bierut, Osobka-Moravsky, Gomulka, and others from past activities. But they are well aware of Mikolajczyk. Mikołajczyk's supporters are doing everything to expose

Mikołajczyk in the best possible light. All government reforms, they argue, were adopted thanks to Mikolajczyk. Thanks to him, the world recognized the Polish government. <...>

... Some of the officials, having seized power, would like to get rich as soon as possible. This part does not hesitate to take bribes. The former President of the city of Gdansk

gained 24 thousand in 3 days
zloty bribes.

Bribery is widespread in the police and housing departments. Police instead

protection of peace and order itself is engaged in robbery. All this put together causes a strong

popular discontent. The population considers the government responsible for all the vices of the state apparatus.

The excesses of the new authorities and Soviet soldiers pushed the Poles into the ranks of the opponents of the communists. The report of the consulate in Gdansk

noted: "A large number of reactionary and anti-Soviet elements (AKovtsy and members of NHS groups) are concentrated in the regions of Gdansk and Gdynia.

The concentration of reactionary forces in these areas is explained by the fact that Gdynia and Gdansk have constant and extensive ties with other countries, and primarily with England, where at present there is a large number of reactionary Polish elements. According to available us according to information, a "Communication Center" was organized in Gdynia, whose task is to communicate with the former government in exile. From him they receive directives, leaflets and appeals.

In mid-September, a leaflet of anti-Soviet and anti-government content was distributed in Gdynia, with vile slander against the Red Army and the Polish government. The leaflet called

to the murder of Soviet soldiers and officers and to the explosion of monuments to the soldiers of the Red Army. The leaflet referred to the explosion of a monument in Czystochowa and was regarded by the reaction as an example of "patriotism".

Despite the concentration of AK groups in the port area, there is no particular activity on their part. This, apparently, is explained by the desire of the leadership of the underground movement to save forces from defeat and the preparation of these forces to provide assistance in the event of a British landing in the areas of these ports. Oddly enough, but the AKovtsy still live in hope for outside help, for the English landing.

Some of the members of the underground groups were legalized (under an amnesty) and now work in state organizations, in the army and the police. Their exit from the underground, apparently, did not mean the rejection of anti-government activities. The facts show that they carry out a lot of anti-state activities and they are quite successful in this. For example, the supply department and the financial department systematically delayed the distribution of food and wages to workers. The indignant workers decided to go on strike. The strike was scheduled for September 9th. It was supposed to cover all enterprises in Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. Hostile elements carried out the work deliberately. One part, working in the institutions, aroused the discontent of the workers and the population by its actions, the other part, playing on the difficulties, was preparing a strike. September 9 was chosen because on this day the solemn transfer of naval vessels to the Polish government was to take place. Only the intervention of the security forces prevented the strike. When checking, it turned out that the food was quite enough for the rationing of cards. The money to pay the wages of the workers was received in a timely manner from

Warsaw. <...>

... A large number of people with a dark past (AKovtsy and members of the NHS) serve in the army and police. These elements, having weapons, often use them against our soldiers and officers. There were facts when our soldiers and officers became their victims in Gdansk and Slupek. The voivodeship police department, instead of clearing itself of all suspicious elements, is trying to take them under its protection.

Separate militiamen are also engaged in robbery of Polish peasants. Robbers often pretend to be Soviet soldiers.

As a result of mass robberies of the peasantry, the latter go to the AK and NZZ groups. It must be assumed that the dark elements working in the public service have the task of compromising the authorities, thereby facilitating the work of underground groups in recruiting peasants into their detachments. The other day, one NHS group was liquidated in the Tczew (Dirschau) region, most of whose members were peasants recruited there several months ago.

About excesses on the part of the Poles in relation to the expelled German population, S. Vogulov, already familiar to us, wrote in his book:

"In July 1945, in connection with one official assignment, I had to go around the territory of Germany, which had ceded to Poland. The whole area seemed to be dead. Surrounded by deserted villages and cities. Absolutely no life. Poles with exceptional cruelty and haste they expelled the entire German population from their native and inhabited places, and the Germans were warned that in twenty minutes they were ready to leave their home and took with them only what they could carry on themselves. The departing Germans had neither cows nor horses. Having put everything that could be taken better on a handcart, the Germans went to the western bank of the Oder. No money, no bread. At the border, all things were checked again and the checkers took away watches and other jewelry that had accidentally survived. These impudent ones did not hesitate to take a more or less tolerable suit, dress or shoes. With this German population, the Poles did what Hitler did with the Jews. The only difference was that the Poles did not shoot the Germans, but simply brutally drove them out and thereby doomed them to starvation."

However, there were also direct killings by the Poles of the exiled Germans. Examples of this can quite a few

found at least in the book of the American historian Norman Neimark "The Flame of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Europe of the 20th Century". There, in

particular, the author paints a vivid and tragic picture of the suffering of the Germans, who were deported from the lands that had ceded to Poland and from the Czech

Sudetes in 1945-1946. The details of these deportations are still little known to both the Russian and Western public. As Neimark emphasizes, "taking advantage of the conditions of war and

post-war transition to the world as a cover, the Czechs and Poles hastened to reduce the old abacus and

expel the Germans from their countries."

Neimark writes: "Police units were stationed along the entire new border along the Oder and Neisse, whose duties included ensuring the migration of

Germans in only one direction - to the west, into the Soviet occupation zone of Germany. "As for those Germans who have not yet left," wrote Gomulka, "conditions must be created for them so that they themselves do not want to stay." In the matter of expelling the Germans, the Polish communist Wladyslaw

Gomulka was in full solidarity with the anti-communist Stanislaw Mikolajczyk.

In this case, Gomulka simply repeated Stalin's words when, at the Potsdam Conference, the Generalissimo told the Western Allies that the Poles were not expelling the Germans, but simply creating unbearable living conditions for them. Of course, revenge for the fact that the Poles

had to be moved during the German occupation. In turn, it was important for Stalin to direct the hatred of the Poles primarily against the Germans, and not against the Soviet Union, which annexed the eastern Polish lands and imposed a communist regime in Poland by force.

Rokossovsky was in Poland at the time. The Marshal could not have been unaware of the ongoing large-scale "ethnic cleansing" of the German population. It is not known how he reacted to this. Did you consider this a "legitimate manifestation" of revenge? Or did he condemn in his soul, considered such a policy inhuman, but could not do anything? I'm afraid we'll never know

answer to this question.

Pretty soon, the Polish communists, with the support of Soviet troops and security agencies, were able to take control of the situation. The popularity of

Mikolajczyk and his Peasant Party was neutralized. In the first post-war elections in January 1947, which saw widespread fraud, the Communists and their allies received more than 80 percent

votes. A one-party

dictatorship of the Polish United Workers' Party was established in the country. The anti-communist underground was suppressed, and Soviet

troops were used against large detachments of anti-communist partisans hiding in the forests. Attacks on Soviet soldiers gradually ceased. And in the Northern Group of Forces, Rokossovsky, by harsh measures, managed to strengthen discipline and minimize excesses against the

local

population.

For more than four years the marshal was at the head of the Northern Group of Forces. And then his fate took a new sharp turn. Army General P. I. Batov wrote in his

biography
Rokossovsky:

"Allied relations with Western countries very soon gave way to the Cold War. Marshal Rokossovsky fell into her very maelstrom. In 1945, he headed

the Northern Group of Soviet Forces stationed in Poland. This continued until October 1949, when Stalin summoned him.

"The situation is such," he said, "that it is necessary that you lead the army of people's Poland. All Soviet titles remain with you, and there you will become the

Minister of Defense,
deputy

Chairman of the Council of Ministers, member of the Politburo and Marshal of Poland. I would very much like, Konstantin Konstantinovich, that you agree, otherwise we may lose Poland. Get it right - go back to your seat.

The leader turned out to be an excellent psychologist. Although Rokossovsky was overwhelmed with mixed feelings, he

replied: "I am a soldier and a communist! I'm ready to go."

And on November 6, 1949, at a joint meeting of the State Council and the Council of Ministers, Polish President Bolesław Bierut made the following statement:

"Taking into account that Marshal Rokossovsky is a Pole by nationality and is popular among the Polish people, we turned to the Soviet government with a request, if possible, to send Marshal Rokossovsky at the disposal

Polish

government, to serve in the ranks of the Polish Army. The Soviet government, taking into account the friendly relations that bind the USSR and Poland ... expressed its consent

grant the request..."

Everything was arranged as if Rokossovsky was invited to the post of Minister of National Defense of Poland at the initiative of the Poles. The Polish biographers of Rokossovsky, Tadeusz Konecki and Ireneusz Rushkevich, in the book "Marshal of the Two Nations", published back in communist Poland, in full accordance with the official version, stated:

"In October 1949, after a short stay at the Löndek-Zdroj sanatorium, where his sister was being treated, Rokossovsky left for Moscow, intending to spend the rest of the vacation there. However, they did not have to rest for long. A few days later he was suddenly

called to

Stalin. This challenge surprised him. When Konstantin Konstantinovich left Poland, everything was in order in the Northern Group of Forces, which he commanded. Relationships also developed

and cooperation with the Polish authorities...

Stalin told the marshal that the Polish government had asked the government of the USSR to send him to serve in the Polish Army as Minister of National Defense.

"I am a soldier and a communist! - answered, as Batov testifies, the surprised Rokossovsky ... - I'm ready to go.

Only this is known to us about the conversation between Marshal Rokossovsky and Stalin. No one, not even General Batov, who enjoyed the special disposition of the marshal, in any of his works devoted to life and activities of Konstantin Konstantinovich, does not write anything else on this topic. It is not known what the marshal felt and experienced at that moment ... "

In fact, Batov makes it clear that the initiative to appoint Rokossovsky as the Minister of National Defense of Poland came from Stalin, who was afraid of losing Poland. And for this

account there is another authoritative evidence.

The poet Felix Chuev, based on his conversations with Air Chief Marshal A. E. Golovanov, stated from the words of Alexander Evgenievich:

"There are many rumors about the appointment of Rokossovsky to Poland after the war. Some historians

believe that Stalin decided to get rid of such folk heroes as Zhukov and Rokossovsky, because he seemed to see them as competitors to himself. He appointed one commander of the district, and sent the other to Poland. This version is clearly not true.

After the war, Rokossovsky was commander-in-chief of the Northern Group of Forces. In 1949 his summoned to Moscow. Stalin invited to the dacha.

Rokossovsky arrived at the "Middle", went to the veranda - no one. Sat down in disbelief, waiting. Stalin appeared from the garden with a bouquet of white roses, and it was clear that he did not cut them, but broke them: his hands were scratched.

"Konstantin Konstantinovich," Stalin addressed, "it is impossible to evaluate your services to the Fatherland. You have been awarded all our awards, but please accept this modest bouquet from me personally!"

... This episode reminded me of the meeting of the emperor with General Yermolov, whom the tsar asked:

"What else can I reward you with, brave old man?" "Give me the title of a German," Yermolov answered. Rokossovsky did not wish anything of the kind, but he was awarded the title of Pole.

"Konstantin Konstantinovich, I have a big personal request for you," said Stalin. - The situation is such that it is necessary that you lead the army of People's Poland. All Soviet titles

remain with you, and there you will become the Minister of Defense, Deputy Chairman of the Council

Ministers, member of the Politburo and Marshal of Poland. I would very much like, Konstantin Konstantinovich, that you agree, otherwise we may lose Poland. Set up business

—
return to your seat.

Rokossovsky himself said that he was not very attracted by such a prospect, especially since he hardly knew the Polish language, but Stalin's request was not a simple request ... I had to go.

Of course, anyone who is familiar with the peculiarities of Stalin's decision-making had no doubt that it was Joseph Vissarionovich who suggested that the Polish comrades invite Rokossovsky to the post of Minister of National Defense. And it was such an offer that Berut and the company could not refuse. Naturally, formally, all this was arranged as

the lowest request of the Polish comrades, to which Stalin could not but respond, showing true solidarity and internationalism. But the Polish communists were well aware that they would not be allowed to command Rokossovsky, that Konstantin Konstantinovich would only do what they ordered from Moscow. And at the same time, Stalin will have extra eyes and ears in the Polish Politburo.

Undoubtedly, Bierut and his associates knew that the appointment of Rokossovsky was caused by recent events in Yugoslavia, which in 1948, after a quarrel between Stalin and Tito, fell away from Soviet

block. Iosif Vissarionovich considered the main reason that Tito managed to get away from the obsessive Soviet tutelage, the fact that the Yugoslav army was

controlled by Tito. Stalin most of all suspected Vladislav Gomulka, who after the war was General Secretary of the Central Committee of the PUWP, of national communism

of the Titoite type. In 1948, he was removed from his post, and later even placed under house arrest. However, Stalin did not fully trust any of the Polish communist

leaders, even Bolesław Bierut, not excluding the possibility that, under certain circumstances, he might follow the example of Tito.

So Rokossovsky had to exclude the possibility of the development of events in Poland according to the Yugoslav model, providing with the help of Soviet officers reliable control over the POLISH Army.

Now Konstantin Konstantinovich found himself in Poland in approximately the same position, in what

his namesake, Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich, stayed in 1815-1830. Being the commander-in-chief of the Polish army, he actually determined the entire Russian policy in Poland, although formally there was also an imperial governor in Warsaw. Under Stalin, the role

Soviet

the governor was carried out by Bierut, but Rokossovsky did not obey him. Moreover, it was clear that in the event of a military conflict with NATO countries, Rokossovsky

would be subordinated not only to the Polish Army, but also to the Northern Group of Forces, which, by the way,

numbers and

armament superior to the Polish army. Probably, the creation of NATO in April and the formation of two German states in September-October 1949 also served as

one of the motives for the appointment of Rokossovsky as commander-in-chief of the Polish army.

In addition to control over the Polish Army, Rokossovsky also provided Stalin with an additional channel of information about the situation in the Polish party and state elite. This is Konstantin

Konstantinovich covered both in top secret reports and in personal meetings with Stalin. After his appointment as Minister of National Defense of Poland, Rokossovsky was on

reception at Stalin's in the Kremlin three times - March 16 and 17, 1950 and September 5, 1952. But there were certainly more meetings with the generalissimo, since one can be sure that the marshal also visited Stalin at the Near Dacha, where Stalin at one time announced his appointment to Poland.

The already mentioned V. V. Rachinsky, who was born in Poland and only in 1925 came to his parents in the USSR, after 1945 got the opportunity to return to his homeland, but never took advantage of it. Vladimir Vatslavovich recalled:

"The image of K.K. Rokossovsky often popped up in front of me. At the request of the Polish government, he returned to Poland. He occupied the high bridge of the Minister of Defense of the PPR. He also knew Polish well. He loved his homeland. Was a Polish patriot. But, as you can understand his history, here, in Russia, he was a Pole among Russians, and there, in Poland, among Poles, he was Russian, Soviet. It may be difficult for some to understand, to understand this duality of the situation. Such duality arises in people who have lost their homeland under certain conditions. IN

in essence, this is a heavy psychological drama of many millions of different emigrants. Different

Circumstances scatter people. How many Poles, like people of many other nationalities, were forced to leave their homeland for various reasons! And how many Russians live far from their homeland! All, all of them yearn for their homeland. Not everyone can return to their native land, the land of their ancestors."

In his first order for the Polish Army dated November 7, 1949, Rokossovsky, just now

promoted to Marshal of Poland, wrote: "It fell to me for many years to serve the cause of the working people in the ranks of the heroic Soviet Army. By the will of military fate, I was the commander of that front, in which soldiers fought heroically on the glorious path from Lenino through Warsaw, Gdansk, Gdynia, Kolobrzeg, Pomeranian Val, up to Berlin

again

of the Polish Army that arose, soldiers of the 1st division, and later of the 1st army ... In performance

duties entrusted to me by the Country and the President, in fulfillment of the duties to the Polish working people and the Polish people, among whom I grew up and with whom I always felt connected with all my heart, as well as to the fraternal Soviet people, who raised me as a soldier and commander, I accept the post entrusted to me in order to devote all my strength to the further development and strengthening of our Polish Army and defense

Commonwealth ... "

V. I. Kardashov wrote in his biography of the marshal:

"Since November 1949, Rokossovsky has been the Minister of National Defense and
deputy

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Poland. He devotes all his energy to the transformation of the Polish Army, to the creation of a modern
army.

During the demobilization of the Polish army in the first post-war years, its strength was reduced from 400 to 200 thousand. In 1949-1955 there
was a
slight increase - up to 280 thousand people. But the main changes took place in the Polish Army in connection with its rearmament and reorganization.
During these
years, a military industry was created in the country, new enterprises were built for the production of artillery, tank, aviation and other equipment that
did not
exist before or were poorly developed. This

allowed

equip Polish soldiers with new military equipment. The strength of the fire of the Polish infantry division increased many times over in
comparison
with the strength of the fire of the pre-war division. The Polish Army now had tank and motorized formations capable of quick maneuver and well
trained to conduct military operations in the new conditions - in the conditions of a nuclear war.

It should be noted that there were a significant number of Soviet officers in the Polish Army.

even before the appointment of Rokossovsky as Minister of National Defense. So, in preparation
so not

of the trial in the case of the former Minister of National Defense, General Marian Spychalski, close to Gomulka, the thesis of his "hostility" to
Soviet officers

and the desire to oust them from the Polish army was one of the main points of accusation. However, before the appointment of
Rokossovsky, the

presence of Soviet officers in the Polish army and the dynamics of changes in their numbers were the result of specific Soviet-Polish
agreements. Until 1949, the

number of Soviet officers and generals in the Polish Army was steadily declining. So, in a conversation with I. V. Stalin on May 24, 1946,
Marshal Michal

Rola-Zhymersky informed,

what from

Polish troops have already seconded 11,400 Soviet officers and that the number of remaining

(4600 people) the Polish government would like to reduce to 1500 people, mostly Poles by nationality. The Soviet leadership did not resist these
intentions of
the Polish

sides. In 1946-1948, the number of Soviet generals in the Polish Army decreased from 44 to 21. Stalin was especially worried that the posts that remained vacant after the departure of Soviet officers were being replaced by regular Polish officers who returned to the country, who had previously fought in the Anders army along with the Western allies.

Under Rokossovsky in 1949-1952, the share of Soviet officers in the Polish officer corps decreased from 6 to 2 percent. This was primarily due to an increase in the number

officer corps of the Polish Army. At the same time, Soviet generals occupied all key positions

in the leadership of the Polish army. In total, more than 50 Soviet generals and more than 12 thousand Soviet officers.

On May 10, 1950, Rokossovsky was elected to the Politburo of the PUWP, and in the fall of 1952 he also became Deputy Prime Minister of the Polish government.

Marshal A.E. Golovanov told F. Chuev that later Rokossovsky told his family and friends how the Poles immediately upon arrival gave him a beautiful secretary who came to the office with papers in the morning: "And everything is written in Polish there, and I'm trying to speak in Polish - I take the Russian root of the word and attach a hissing ending to it: "Having understood, report!" They say, figure it out, and then report. For some reason, the secretary blushed and asked if Pan Rokossovsky knew "Polish language" well. It turned out that the marshal told her: "Undress and lie down!" In fact, this is a typical linguistic anecdote based on the different meanings of the same words in Russian and Polish. Rumor just linked him to the name

Rokossovsky. Although by that time Konstantin Konstantinovich really knew the Polish language poorly, but only because of the many years of lack of practice. Arriving in Poland, he immediately asked his adjutant to find him an reader of Polish literature, according to which schoolchildren

studied their native language. And very soon the marshal restored the skills of the Polish language, which was his native language, and became quite fluent in Polish. Moreover, contemporaries noted that his dialect was the one that was typical for Warsaw at the beginning of the 20th century, during his childhood.

The grandson of Marshal Konstantin Vilyevich Rokossovsky recalled:

"In Warsaw, he was given half of a small mansion, he lived there with his grandmother - mother

entered the institute and went to study in Moscow. She got married there and I was born. My first memories of my grandfather date back to the Polish period. In 1956, my parents and I came to visit him and lived in a dacha near Warsaw. We went for mushrooms in an open carriage, walked. I attracted everyone's attention to myself - the officers patted me on the head, joked that the future marshal was in front of them.

The former President of Poland, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, in an interview with the Russian version of Newsweek magazine in 2005, in response to an anecdote cited by a correspondent about Stalin telling Rokossovsky: "It's easier for me to dress you alone in a Polish uniform than the whole Army Polish change into Soviet clothes," he remarked: "The appointment of Rokossovsky is a difficult problem. His Polish origin was widely known; for example, I knew his sister - she has been in general all her life

lived in Warsaw. But he became minister from the position of commander of the Soviet group of troops in Poland and appointed Soviet generals to many posts who did not know either our language or country. The Cold War was already beginning, and Poland was made part of the confrontation between East and West. The Polish army under Rokossovsky, of course, strengthened, but also greatly increased, and a large army cost the country colossal funds. And in the same interview, Jaruzelski

in response to

the question of what he knew about the execution of Polish officers in Katyn, he stated: "I was in the Soviet military school when the TASS statement was printed: they say that the German provocation is widespread - the Nazis claim that the Soviet authorities shot the Poles, but this is a lie, they did it themselves Germans. And there was a commission of academician Burdenko, she confirmed: yes, the Germans shot. And representatives from all the Polish units were gathered, they were taken to Katyn, and they told us

They said with complete conviction: yes, the Germans shot ours.

The first doubts, according to Jaruzelsky, arose in him even when the Soviet prosecutor R. A. Rudenko at the Nuremberg trials "raised the topic of Katyn, and then, when it was necessary

evidence, he removed the issue. And then in the West they wrote a lot about the Soviet execution in Katyn, and in Poland it was known. I turned to Marshal Grechko for explanations about Katyn, but I always got one answer: this is imperialist propaganda. Well, what was to be done in those conditions? The only thing I managed to achieve was that since the 1970s we were allowed to lay wreaths in Katyn. And only Gorbachev gave me the documents about the execution."

I think the general was a little twitchy here. Documents and materials published in the West, including the testimony of Polish officers who returned from captivity, left no doubt about Soviet guilt by the end of the 1940s. But General Jaruzelski was ashamed to admit to himself and the world that, without doubting that the Soviet Union was responsible for the Katyn crime, he faithfully served the communist regime established by the USSR in Poland.

Rokossovsky never spoke to anyone about Katyn. And not only because in the USSR on

the Katyn case was tabooed. I am afraid that Konstantin Konstantinovich did everything to convince himself that the

Polish officers were class enemies that interfered with the future Sovietization of Poland, and therefore they had to be destroyed. Anyway, Marshal of Poland

sincerely sobbed over the coffin of Stalin. But he, who himself spent two and a half years in Kresty and reached the heights of his military career, should have known very well that decisions of such a level as the execution of 22 thousand Polish military and civilian prisoners could not be carried out without the knowledge and sanction of the leader.

The Soviet Union gave Poland large loans for the development of heavy industry, which was primarily of military importance

(including for the Soviet atomic project). As writes

Polish historian Andrzej Skrzypek, "the Kremlin achieved an increase in Poland's military obligations by creating a system

of personal dependence of the Polish Army on the Soviet Army through destination

Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky commander-in-chief Sh 5re. Since Rokossovsky was surrounded by numerous Soviet officers, we can talk about the Sovietization / Russification of the army. The army, however, is well-equipped and trained, unprecedented in size - numbering 400 thousand military personnel. The maintenance of such a large army in peacetime could not but affect

on the standard of living of the population. This huge army was the result of the implementation of the military doctrine of

the massive use of ground troops, best equipped with tanks, artillery pieces and other weapons of this type.

The size of the Polish army, compared with pre-war times, almost doubled, and it was led by Soviet officers and

generals, led by Rokossovsky. Konstantin Konstantinovich

did a lot to increase the strength of the Polish Army and equip it with more modern weapons and military equipment.

However, this caused a far from unambiguous reaction in the Polish

society. The militarization of the country was a heavy burden on the Polish people, not yet

recovering from the effects of the war. In addition, most Poles were convinced

What

Soviet officers are preparing the Polish Army in order to fight primarily for Soviet, and not for Polish interests proper. There was no hostility among

the Poles against yesterday's allies - England and the USA, and the Poles did not want to fight with them. On the contrary,

many

tied up

the possibility of liberating Poland from Soviet domination with a mythical British or

American landing (the same sentiments were common in the Baltics).

Poland increasingly fell under the control of special services created under the active Soviet

participation. As Russian historians A.F. Noskova and G.P. Murashko write, "the development of the situation within the ruling elite

in the direction necessary for the Soviet leadership was one of

major

tasks of advisers to the USSR Ministry of State Security in each of their countries of residence. Reports of adviser S.P.

Davydov and his deputy Klimashev from Warsaw at the turn of 1949-1950. about the course of "pushing back" in summer -

in the fall of 1949, Rol-Zhymersky from the post of Minister of National Defense of Poland and the preparation of this place for

Marshal of the Soviet Union K.K. Rokossovsky confirm this from all

obvious."

In 1950, there were 410,000 full-time employees and agents of the Ministry of Public Security. Thus, one employee or agent accounted for 64 Poles, and if we take only the population over 15 years old, then 46. In the Polish Army, the functions

political police and military counterintelligence was carried out by the Military Information, during

chapter

which was Colonel of the MGB Dmitry Petrovich Voznesensky. At the end of 1952, she had more than 24,000 secret agents, so that

there was one agent for every 15 soldiers. In 1944-1956

In 1999, the military information bodies arrested 16,932 servicemen for political reasons. From January 1, 1948 to October 1, 1952, the

number of political prisoners in Poland increased from 26.4 to 49.5 thousand people. Until 1955, about five thousand death sentences were

handed down (of which half were carried out). More than 20,000 people died in prison between 1945 and 1956.

prisoners

— u both criminal and political. In 1944-1956, about

thousands of Catholic priests - every tenth. In 1953, Cardinal Primate Stefan Wyszyński was interned, and a decree appeared on appointment to the spiritual church areas only with the approval of the state.

Rokossovsky had clashes with D.P. Voznesensky more than once. Once, during a conversation, Konstantin Konstantinovich grabbed the colonel by the hand on which the watch was on, pulled it up, so that it became clear that wires were coming from the clock, and in this form led Voznesensky to the reception room. There was no doubt that the head of the

Military Information recorded all conversations with

Rokossovsky, in order to then report them to Moscow. Rokossovsky, in particular, insisted that counterintelligence should not arrest officers without obtaining his approval as Minister of Defense.

The great-granddaughter of Marshal A.K. Rokossovskaya believes:

"The Poles generally blamed Rokossovsky for almost all the tragic events during his work as the Minister of Defense of Poland. I have heard what he is saying

responsibility for

arrests of Polish officers. I am ready to agree with this if they show me at least one arrest order signed by Rokossovsky. But there are no such documents. Because he was the Minister of Defense, his duties included the formation of the Polish army, increasing combat capability, and providing modern weapons. And purges in the army - this, one must think, was part of the duties of the military prosecutor. Rokossovsky was not a politician and knew little about it. And all

he did not remain indifferent. He did everything in his power.

Here is an example. According to Rokossovsky's Polish deputy Franciszek Cymbarevich, the marshal signed an order

according to which the special services did not have the right to arrest an officer without the written consent of his

commander. Once, for such consent, they came to Tsimbarevich. He refused to sign the order for the arrest of his subordinate.

Went to Rokossovsky. And the marshal supported him. Said, "If you have confidence in this man and you are sure that he is not guilty of anything, then you have done absolutely the right thing. I have seen from my own experience how expensive nothing is.

such a mistake for a guilty person.

It is worth noting that Ada Konstantinovna contradicts herself. Since an order was issued that the arrests of officers should be coordinated with higher commanders, it means that some of them, when it came to persons in high ranks, had to be

coordinated with the Minister of Defense. In addition, Rokossovsky was a member of the PUWP Politburo and deputy head of government, and

decisions to carry out repressions and purges were made by the Politburo. Although, I emphasize often

meetings were held without the participation of Rokossovsky.

The reaction to the appointment of Rokossovsky was far from unambiguous and rather negative.
also

among the Polish party elite. To a greater extent, Yakub Berman, Hilary Mints and other members of the so-called "pro-Soviet" group gravitated towards

Rokossovsky - ardent opponents

Vladislav Gomulka. They sought to make Rokossovsky's name popular in Poland.

On January 20, 1950, the Soviet ambassador to Poland, V. Z. Lebedev, in a recording of a conversation with Yakub Berman, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the PUWP, noted:

"Berman said that in connection with the appointment of Rokossovsky, some
quantity

letters from Polish citizens, which contain requests for favorable consideration of the repatriation of their relatives, some of whom are under arrest, from the USSR to

Poland. Berman said that in the interests of popularizing Rokossovsky it would be quite desirable

consider such requests and those that may be granted.

I replied to Berman that such a question could be put before the Soviet authorities, in my opinion, on the condition that the Polish state security authorities

first study the social status and political aspirations of the petitioners themselves. This applies not only to applications filed in the name of Rokossovsky, but in general to those requests that are received in

embassy

issues of the release of Polish citizens imprisoned in the USSR, or on issues of repatriation of Polish citizens from the USSR who did not have time to

exercise the right to repatriation in due time.

Berman promised that he would organize, through the security agencies, a check on the advisability of supporting the petitions of Polish citizens

who were asking for a review of their cases.

relatives imprisoned in the USSR.

But very soon the Berman group began to fear that Rokossovsky might get too much

great power, and began to put spokes in his wheels. Already in February 1950, the USSR Ambassador in Warsaw, V. Z. Lebedev, reported to Moscow

in a letter addressed to I. V. Stalin about the opposition to Rokossovsky's plans for the army by the "leading party four (Berut, Mints, Berman, Zambrovsky)". They

delayed the approval of the budget of the Ministry of Defense and

increase in
salaries for officers of the Polish Army. Lebedev's letter emphasized:

"The estimate was prepared mainly before Rokossovsky and agreed with Mints, and Rokossovsky raised the issue of salaries because of the extremely poor financial situation of the officers, which he saw. They take it at this meeting (the military commission of the Politburo. - B.S.) in an elevated tone

objected to increased spending on the army. During his speech, it was clear that he was dissatisfied not only with the estimate, but also with something else, and that he reflected the dissatisfaction of the other three members of the leading core of the party (Mints, Berman and Zambrovsky), who remained silent, limiting themselves to individual remarks. Rokossovsky realized that he was given a "bathhouse" not for reasons of economy

funds, but for other reasons. After the meeting, he stayed with Bierut alone. Bierut gradually switched to a friendly tone and then said: "It seemed to us (that is, to him, Mints and others) that you want to take too much power into your own hands."

Rokossovsky believes that in the leadership of the party there is a closely knit group consisting of Mints, Berman and Zambrovsky, which actually decides all matters and which leads Bierut. But Bierut does not see the danger of such a situation. It was this group, and not Bierut, who suddenly became afraid that Rokossovsky would take too much power into his own hands, and it was they who decided to "besiege" Rokossovsky by doing it through the hands of Bierut at the aforementioned commission meeting. Rokossovsky believes that this group does not let anyone into the leadership of the party, to Bierut, although here in the party, of course, there are enough developed and honest people.

From conversations with individual prominent party figures, Rokossovsky saw that the current
V

these people see the position of the party leadership, they are oppressed by it and expect it to change. Alexander Zavadsky spoke to Rokossovsky in exactly this spirit. The same Zavadsky told Rokossovsky that Politburo member Yuzwiak (Witold) was in a state of despair because of such

provisions in
party leadership."

Rokossovsky understood from the very beginning that not everyone in Poland was happy with him. He later told Colonel F. D. Sverdlov: "It cannot be said that the entire officer corps of the Armed Forces of Poland warmly received me. Often during visits to the divisions, from the depths of the troops built on the parade grounds for the meeting, single, and sometimes group cries were heard: "Leave for Russia!", "Down with the red marshal!".

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Rokossovsky also told Sverdlov that "in January 1950, when I was visiting artillery units in Lublin, they shot at me with a pistol. The shot was fired from a great distance, and the bullet flew past. The shooter was not found. Three months later, in Poznan, they fired at my car with machine gun fire. The accompanying officer turned out to be wounded, the rear

glass, but I was not hurt. And this time the shooters were not found. Opposed me
mostly

former members of the Home Army and formations of the "National Armed Forces". Therefore, it was difficult to work in Poland."

In August 1952, Rokossovsky took a sharp stance in connection with the failure to fulfill military orders.

Polish industry, which caused Bierut's displeasure. Rokossovsky spoke
also for

speeding up the consideration of the "cases" of Wladyslaw Gomulka and Marian Spychalski, which also annoyed Berug. In January 1953, according to Colonel D.P. Voznesensky, a new

a sharp clash between Rokossovsky and Berut in connection with another attempt by the marshal to achieve an increase in the pay of the officers. The confrontation reached such a sharpness that Rokossovsky openly declared the impossibility of "remaining in the post of Minister of Defense." According to some reports, in February 1953, the Polish leadership made an attempt through Voznesensky to "consult in Moscow" in connection with the "deterioration of personal and business relations between Bierut and Rokossovsky." However, Stalin's death and Voznesensky's recall from Poland dramatically changed the situation.

When Stalin died, Rokossovsky came to the funeral. The poet Alexei Surkov in a poem on the death of the leader wrote:

Here, in front of the coffin, the Marshal of Poland is
crying - Your soldier who never cried.

Konstantin Vilyevich Rokossovsky testifies:

"If 1937 was still sometimes remembered in our family (from where I know some of the details

that case), then I didn't hear a single word about Stalin (in any case, in connection with my grandfather, that's for sure). Stalin died and went down in history for our family, but not family history, but world history. The story circulating on the Internet about how Rokossovsky allegedly told Khrushchev that "comrade Stalin is a saint for me" is nothing more than an anecdote generated by the exalted imagination of one well-known writer. And the fact that Rokossovsky did not come out with revelations did not curse

Stalin, with or without reason, does not yet prove that he adored him.

For Rokossovsky, Stalin was first and foremost the Supreme Commander, and, in the opinion of the marshal, he was better suited than any other person in the country at that time for this position. Perhaps Konstantin Konstantinovich thought that it would be better if there were such a leader as Stalin, with all his cruelties and unfair repressions, than Kaganovich or Molotov, who did not have the qualities of a leader and were accustomed to being in power all the time, were in power.

shadows

Stalin, or even, God forbid, Zhukov, with his ruthlessness towards his own soldiers and the absence of any diplomatic abilities. And he absolutely sincerely cried at Stalin's funeral, although this does not mean that he approved of everything that Stalin did and believed that most of the repressed enemies of the people were really guilty.

Rokossovsky also considered dishonorable to criticize Stalin after his death. He was hardly pleased to see the late leader being kicked by Khrushchev and other smaller "leaders" who, during the life of the Generalissimo, trembled at his name alone.

After Stalin's death, a struggle for power began in the Soviet leadership. In June 1953, L.P. Beria was arrested and later shot.

In this regard, D.P. Voznesensky was recalled from Poland and soon arrested. In the Soviet leadership, the struggle of supporters of the preservation of Stalin's

principles of rigid centralization and adherents of a more liberal approach to Eastern European allies.

Under these conditions, the communist leaders of the countries of Eastern Europe, including Poland, sought to gain greater political independence. So, in June 1953, B. Berut, in a letter to G. M. Malenkov, noting the timeliness and expediency of "transitioning to a system of military advisers on the same basis as in other countries of people's democracy", made a request to send 308 military advisers to Poland (269 to the army and 34 to the security agencies). Of the named number, 93 officers were to arrive in the country by the end of 1953.

The arrival of advisers was supposed not to increase, but to reduce the dependence of the Polish Army on

the Soviet army, since it meant a significant reduction in the presence
Soviet

officers in command positions in the Polish army.

At the beginning of 1955, 154 Soviet advisers worked in the Polish Army. In 1957-1958, almost all military advisers were withdrawn.

After Stalin's death, Rokossovsky's situation in Poland, already difficult, became even more complicated. Here is just one very eloquent document
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recording of a conversation between D. I. Zaikin, adviser to the USSR embassy in Warsaw, and Rokossovsky, which took place on October 1, 1953. On October 20, the Soviet ambassador to Poland, G. M. Popov, sent it to V. M. Molotov, who was then the Minister of Foreign Affairs. And on October 31, Molotov sent the text of the conversation to Malenkov, Khrushchev and Bulganin:

"During a reception hosted by the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Warsaw on the occasion of the National Day of
the People's

Republic of China, I had a brief conversation with Comrade ROKOSSOVSKI. Talking about the military

advisers, Soviet specialists seconded to the Polish Army by the Government of the USSR for

at the request of the Government of the Polish People's Republic, comrade ROKOSSOVSKY declared jokingly,
what he

he himself would like to be the chief military adviser, as this would determine the length of his stay in

Poland.

Marshal ROKOSSOVSKY motivates his desire to leave Poland with a long stay
V

this country and the difficulties that are created for him in his work. Marshal ROKOSSOVSKI said that in Poland they know how to create conditions under which it is difficult to work.

He explains the reason for this by the fact that at one time he raised in the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party the question of the need to make certain replacements in the Polish Army.

And

reshuffles, in particular, in the political administration of the Polish Army and its other important institutions, where, in violation of the party approach to the selection of personnel, those were staffed on a national and family basis from persons of Jewish nationality. Such an incorrect selection of personnel prevented the strengthening of the Polish army. Although the improvement of the personnel of the political administration and other instances of the Polish army, said Comrade ROKOSSOVSKY,

was carried out with

the approval of the Central Committee of the PUWP, some leading party workers who influence to Comrade.

BERUT, dramatically changed their attitude towards Comrade. ROKOSSOVSKY.

In a conversation, comrade ROKOSSOVSKY said that comrade. TAKE a good man, but is very malleable and to a certain extent reflects the thoughts of those persons who belong to Comrade.

ROKOSSOVSKY unkindly. To these persons Comrade. ROKOSSOVSKII refers to BERMAN, MINTS, ZAMBROVSKY.

Tov. ROKOSSOVSKY believes that it was precisely in connection with the unfriendly attitude towards him that the Polish comrades had the idea to invite the former colonel general back to Poland

KORCHETS (Vladislav Korchits, former Chief of the General Staff and Vice Minister of National Defense. - B.S.), who is currently in the USSR. This is explained by the opinion of comrade

Rokossovsky, by the fact that some people in Poland consider him a representative of Moscow, and

KORCETS is considered their person, who, first of all, takes care of the interests of Poland. ABOUT

KORCHETSE comrade. ROKOSSOVSKY responded very negatively.

The Ambassador of the USSR in Poland G. M. Popov and the head of the European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

M. V. Zimyanin wrote to V. M. Molotov on December 26, 1953:

"In the work of the Central Committee of the PUWP and local leading party bodies, gross violations of the principle of collectivity of the party leadership are allowed. The Politburo of the PUWP Central Committee meets rarely, usually once a month.

The practical direction of the activity of the party and the state is concentrated in the hands of a narrow circle of persons—that is, Berut, Berman, Mints, Ochab, Zambrovsky. The other members of the Politburo, including Comrade Rokossovsky, are little involved in the work of the Politburo.

Tov. Berut overestimates the qualities of some members of the Politburo, especially comrades. Berman and Mints, in whose hands the most important sections of the party and state leadership are concentrated. Tov. Berman, who is actually Comrade Bierut's deputy in the party, and also deals with issues of foreign policy and public security, allows major political

failures and mistakes. Tov. Berman bears a significant part of the responsibility for violating the norms of party life in the

PUWP, neglecting ideological work, and for perverting party principles in the selection of personnel for the party and state apparatus. In recent years, there have been a number of instances of Polish diplomats fleeing abroad and not returning from there. Recently, a prominent member of the public security apparatus, Svyatlo, fled to West Germany. Should

It should be noted that the brother of Comrade Berman himself, a major Zionist, emigrated to Israel in 1947.

Comrade Mints, who is Comrade Bierut's first deputy in the Council of Ministers and head of the State Planning Commission, is largely to blame for serious shortcomings in economic policy. The presence of disproportions in the development of industry and agriculture, a significant decrease in

real wages of workers and employees, unsatisfactory solution of the problems of raising rural

economy is largely determined by the mistakes made by Comrade Mints in the planning of the national economy.

Tov. Mintz also allowed the apparatus of the State Planning Commission to be clogged with alien elements, persons associated with foreign countries.

In fact, Berut, Ochab, Berman, Mints and other members of the Politburo often held narrow meetings to which Rokossovsky was not invited. He did not become his own among the members of the Polish Politburo. In Poland, Konstantin Konstantinovich remained a "stranger". friendly, human

he maintained relations only with some officers and generals of the Polish Army, whom he had met during the war.

Tug Rokossovsky received another unexpected blow. On April 5, 1955, the former commander of the 1st Polish Army, General Zygmunt Berling, sent a letter to the Minister of the Armed Forces of the USSR N. A. Bulganin sharply criticizing Rokossovsky. He took revenge for the wrong

How is he

considered removal from command of the 1st Army of the Polish Army in the fall of 1944, in which Rokossovsky was also involved. Arguing that "the Polish Army has no soul, the road to the heart of a soldier is closed," Beurling emphasized that the Minister of Defense "must have a political mind, know the psychology of the people and troops." The general accused the marshal of the fact that he "treats the matter with disregard for his duties, despises the feelings of the people, very much in this respect

sensitive." Berling wrote: "I am sure that Comrade. R. unable fulfill their

present and future challenges. He appears to me as a helpless, wandering and rushing person in the dark. Beurling directly raised in his letter the question of removing Rokossovsky from

the position of Minister of National Defense, emphasizing that this post "could be taken by one of the members of the Politburo of the PUWP Central Committee."

In all likelihood, Beurling's letter was written on the initiative of Polish leaders seeking to encourage Moscow to replace Rokossovsky at the head of the Polish army.

In the same 1955, a funny incident happened to Rokossovsky. As the Polish

brigade

general Tomasz Pyuro, "when invited ministers of defense of the socialist countries and dozens of Soviet generals gathered at one of the observation posts at large maneuvers in the Transcarpathian military district, the head of the foreign service of the Soviet general staff (I don't remember his last name) announced through a megaphone: "The marshals will arrive now Bulganin, Zhukov and Vasilevsky" (Bulganin was then the Minister of Defense of the USSR, and Zhukov and Vasilevsky were his deputies). And he continued: "All the generals of the Soviet army - stand on the right! All ministers are on the left!"

The generals silently stood up as they were told. Among the ministers, however, there was a slight confusion: after all, they represented independent states and, in relation to the Soviet minister, military regulations did not oblige them to

anything. However, after hesitating, they nevertheless stood in a line on the left. Rokossovsky didn't like it. Yes, of course, he also stood on the left, but he did not react to the command "Attention!" given by the gallant guardian of the foreign guests at the moment Bulganin appeared. And after greetings, he went up to Zhukov and whispered something in his ear. A couple of minutes later the unfortunate manager stood at attention in front of Zhukov; I only heard his last

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words: "Get out of here, you fool!" - and that general was not seen again. After this incident, the ministers, when the leadership of the USSR Ministry of Defense appeared, settled down as they wanted.

The denouement came a year later. The conflict between the authorities and society resulted in mass unrest

in Poznan on May 28, 1956, accompanied by clashes between their participants and state security units and the army, which led to the death of more than seventy people. Along with other officials, responsibility for this, at least morally, was laid on Rokossovsky.

The great-granddaughter of Marshal Ada Konstantinovna emphasizes in this regard: "In Poland, an investigation is now

underway into the events of 1956 in Poznan. I read an interview with the prosecutor who is handling this case.

When asked by a

journalist who is to blame for the tragedy, is it Rokossovsky, the prosecutor replied that there were no

documents and orders on the

introduction of troops or the opening of fire signed by Rokossovsky. The orders are signed by other people."

In preparation for the US plenum of the PUWP Central Committee in October 1956, Gomulka's supporters emphasized

V

violation of the long-term order, did not begin to coordinate the composition of the updated governing bodies with the Soviet leadership. Particularly defiant was the predetermined withdrawal of Marshal Rokossovsky from the Polish Politburo.

The USSR was aware that on October 10 a meeting of the Politburo of the PUWP Central Committee was held in Warsaw, at which the political situation in the country and the party was discussed. The first secretary of the Central Committee, Edward Ochab, Bierut's successor as leader of the Polish communists and the Polish state, pointed out the need to dismiss the Soviet officers who held command posts from the Polish Army, agreeing to leave only those who would accept Polish citizenship. Rokossovsky sharply objected to him. Konstantin Konstantinovich wrote this to Moscow about this: "Indignant

so

statement, I directly told Comrade Ochab that this was a wrong line and that it was aimed at separating Poland from the Soviet Union, that there was no reason for such haste, and that there was an agreement between the governments of the USSR and the Polish People's Republic on a gradual

replacement

of Soviet officers and the reduction of Soviet officers and the reduction of advisers, which should be carried out. I said ... that in the Polish Army there are Soviet officers who went with the Polish army from the USSR through all of Poland to Berlin. These are honest, loyal and honored officers, they played a decisive role in the organization and building of the Polish Army."

Interestingly, this skirmish was not reflected at all in the official minutes of the October 10 meeting. According to Rokossovsky, his position was supported by Zenon Nowak, Frantisek Yuzwiak, Alexander Zavadsky and "partially supported" by the future first secretary of the PUWP Central Committee Edward Terek and Roman

Novak, while Ochaba's position was unconditionally supported only by Roman Zambrowski and Józef Cyrankiewicz. Ochab's statement that the visit to Poland by N. S. Khrushchev (in March) and N. A. Bulganin (in June) "carried elements of interference in the affairs of Poland" was not included in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Politburo of the PUWP Central Committee on October 12 was already held with the active participation of Vladislav Gomulka, who during Stalin's lifetime remained under house arrest. About its results

On October 13, Ochab, Cyrankiewicz, and Zawadzki informed the Soviet ambassador to Poland, P. K. Ponomarenko, a former member of the military council of the Central Front at the time when Rokossovsky commanded it. It became known that the plenum of the PUWP Central Committee was scheduled for October 17, what's on it

it is planned to make Gomulka a member of the Politburo, remove one of the most pro-Soviet communist leaders Hilary Mintz from the Politburo and the government, and

to hear the penitential speech of Yakub Berman, another supporter of unconditional submission to the Soviet dictate, already withdrawn from the Politburo.

Ochab also spoke of "coal reparations", stating that "in Poland, talk is very widespread, questions are asked and

have

a place to speak about unequal economic relations, unequal deliveries, etc."

On October 18, Khrushchev ordered the Northern Group of Forces, the Baltic Fleet and the Baltic Military District to be put on alert. By order of G.K. Zhukov, two

Soviet tank divisions moved towards Warsaw. At the same time, there, on the orders of Rokossovsky, no doubt

agreed with Moscow, the tank corps of the Polish Army moved. Under these conditions, Khrushchev succeeded in postponing the opening of the plenum of

the Central Committee of the PUWP to October 19, and in the morning of that day, during a blitz visit to Warsaw, Nikita Sergeevich managed to agree with the Polish

leadership on revising prices for Polish coal supplied to the USSR and agreed that the Polish communists would solve their problems. personnel issues

without the sanction of the CPSU, Rokossovsky and other Soviet officers will be recalled from the Polish Army, and Soviet tanks will return to their places of

permanent deployment. In fact, Khrushchev gave the green light to the return to power of Gomulka, who was elected at the plenum the first secretary

of the PUWP Central Committee.

In order to maintain the former degree of influence on the Polish leadership, a delegation of the CPSU headed by N. S. Khrushchev left for Warsaw. On

October 19, difficult negotiations took place, the result of which was reflected in the following working record of the meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU Central

Committee, which heard information about the trip to Warsaw: "There is only one way out - to do away with what is in Poland. If Rokossovsky is left,

then be patient in time. In other words, the Moscow leaders at first planned to "finish" the Polish reformers by force, in which the marshal was assigned

considerable

role.

In Warsaw, they started talking about preparing a coup d'état. Perhaps not without grounds. By

By order of Rokossovsky, some parts of the Polish Army began advancing to the capital; on October 19, officers from the Warsaw district were gathered for a

meeting. In accordance with the order of the Minister of Defense of the USSR G.K. Zhukov, the Northern Group of Forces and the Baltic Fleet were brought

to an increased degree of combat readiness. On the second day of the USh plenum, October 20, at

Warsaw from Western Poland began to advance the Soviet tank division (according to

Polish

sources - two divisions). To the delegates of the plenum, who demanded an explanation from the Minister of National Defense, Rokossovsky said that these were "planned maneuvers" of the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the country. Such an explanation did not satisfy the participants of the plenum, and at their request the tank column was first stopped and later returned to the place of permanent deployment.

In Moscow, as the situation in Poland was being discussed, the mood in the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU became

more and more peaceful. China's position played a significant role here: Chinese President Liu Shaoqi and party leader Deng Xiaoping, who visited Khrushchev

upon his return from Warsaw, sharply objected to forceful interference in Polish affairs. In the end, it was decided to abandon the use of force in Poland. Just at that time, the Soviet

invasion of Hungary to suppress the anti-communist revolution. It was risky to undertake military intervention in two countries of Eastern Europe at once, especially since there was danger

meet armed resistance not only in Hungary, but also in Poland, where part of the Polish Army, led by junior officers, could oppose the Soviet intervention

Poles.

In addition, there was a danger of a partisan warfare in the country, the traditions of which Poland was so rich in. Therefore, Khrushchev was ultimately satisfied with guarantees that the new

the Polish leadership will not deviate from the course of socialist construction and will continue to be friends with the USSR.

On October 22, in a letter sent to the Central Committee of the PUWP and signed by Khrushchev, the Soviet side agreed to withdraw from the Polish

Army officers and generals of the Soviet armed forces, including Rokossovsky. On November 13, elections were held for the Politburo of the PUWP Central

Committee. Of the 75 participants in the plenum, only 23 people voted for Rokossovsky. On the same day, Konstantin Konstantinovich resigned from all state posts of the PPR and returned to Moscow two days later.

Soviet dissident historian N. G. Obruchnikov, who visited Poland in the autumn of 1956, recalled:

"I observed the situation on the eve of the October events. In the small resort town where I rested, we were very often taken on a sightseeing bus together with the ministers of the Polish

governments who were there on vacation. These were representatives

conservative wing from the
Rokossovsky and Novak group. They were indignant at the pressure of revisionism. Very offended

talked about the fact that they had already been practically put up, that they were only formally

ministers and deputy ministers and after the holidays they will no longer return to their seats in

government, from where they were forced out by supporters of Gomulka. And Gomulka himself was then barely rehabilitated.

Later, I was aware of everything that happened at the October plenum of the PUWP Central Committee. What was not clear from Soviet reports, for

example, why all voivodship assemblies, only
What

who have changed their party leadership, send greeting telegrams to the Central Committee of the PUWP,
—

a little later, familiar Poles, with whom we were all especially looking for

contacts. We knew from the newspapers about the throwing of Rokossovsky's tanks and about the raid of the ships of the Baltic Fleet towards Gdynia. The

Warsaw Committee of the Polish Party was at the height of events so much that it called on people to take to the streets to build barricades ... "

Felix Chuev conveys the story of the last days of Rokossovsky's stay in Poland in this way from the words

A. E. Golovanova:

"He spent seven years in the Polish People's Republic in its high posts. In 1956, unrest began there, protests against the power of the communists.

"The Polish Politburo doesn't know what to do. Day and night they sit and drink kava, said Konstantin Konstantinovich. - And the situation in the country is

difficult, communists are being killed ... I listened, listened, went to my office and called

tank corps..." At that time, Poland failed to break with socialism. But Rokossovsky was forced to fly to Moscow - forever. They say with only one suitcase.

As usual".

Here it should be noted that it is unlikely that Rokossovsky could have decided to advance the tank corps to the capital without permission from Moscow.

When the marshal was actually expelled from Poland in the fall of 1956, he vowed never to return there again. And he kept his word.

Marshal's grandson

Konstantin Vilyevich Rokossovsky

testifies:

"He spent seven years to make the Polish Army a modern army,
invested in it

soul. He was a soldier, knew nothing about politics. And the way they treated him is very his

offended, especially since it was his homeland. When he left there, he said to his grandmother: "My legs will not be here anymore." And no matter who invited him, he invariably refused. In Poland, except as a passage, he was never again.

Marshal's adjutant Boris Nikolaevich Zakhatsky recalled:

"K.K. Rokossovsky had an unimportant relationship with Vladislav Gomulka, who
survived it

from Poland. Once Rokossovsky told me casually that Gomulka was coming to the USSR on a visit, and,

unfortunately, I would have to attend a reception in his honor. Indeed, a few days later, N. S. Khrushchev called on the

"Kremlin" and asked where Rokossovsky was. I was at that time in the office and said that he would be in half an hour.

Khrushchev ordered to hand over to Rokossovsky that he must be at the reception in honor of Gomulka. I still cannot explain

why I did not convey this order to Rokossovsky, and he was not present at this reception. The next day, Khrushchev called

him and abruptly asked why Rokossovsky was not at the reception. He replied that he was not

invited. Khrushchev said that he had conveyed the invitation by phone through an adjutant. Rokossovsky replied that no one had given him anything. Khrushchev demanded "to expel such

adjutant." Rokossovsky promised to "deal with the adjutant." Putting down the phone, he came up to me, shook my hand and

said: "Hello to you from Khrushchev." And he thanked me for helping him out."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN LAST YEARS

Upon his return to the USSR, Rokossovsky was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense in November 1956.

Returning

to the USSR, which really became a second home for him, Konstantin Konstantinovich experienced great relief. Now

he was freed from political intrigues, from

the need to play the role of a politician, for which he had never prepared and which was a burden to him.

In June 1957, Rokossovsky, while remaining Deputy Minister of Defense, was appointed to

position of Chief Military Inspector. In October 1957, during a period of exacerbation

situation in the Middle

East, the marshal was briefly appointed commander of the Transcaucasian military

district, in order to demonstrate the determination of the USSR to take the most firm measures (the name of one of the largest commanders was well known in the world). This was a somewhat belated response to the "Eisenhower Doctrine" proclaimed in March 1957, according to which the United States

guaranteed military assistance to the states of the Middle East in the event of a threat of communism. Speaking on October 23, 1957 at a meeting of party

activists of the central apparatus of the Ministry of Defense and the Moscow Military District, Khrushchev declared: "... Today I can already tell you that the enemy, we have received information, is retreating. (Applause.) The Americans begin

sweep up

traces, begin to refuse, begin to explain that it was the Russians who invented it, we never pushed the Turks to war. And today, when we published that Marshal Rokossovsky was appointed

commander of the Transcaucasian Military District, this also matters. (Stormy applause.)". But already in January 1958, Rokossovsky was returned from Tbilisi to

Moscow to his former position as chief inspector. His appointment as commander of the Transcaucasian Military District was nothing more than a demonstration. Deciding that a potential adversary reacted to this

appointment

properly, Khrushchev brought Rokossovsky back to Moscow.

The attitude of Rokossovsky to the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the policy of de-Stalinization pursued by Khrushchev is evidenced by the grandson of Marshal Konstantin Vilyevich:

"If they didn't talk about Stalin in our family, then I heard about the 20th Congress from my mother more than once, and precisely in connection with my grandfather's attitude towards him. Rokossovsky believed that the exposure of the cult and all the circumstances associated with it was necessary and had to happen sooner or later. But that's how it was done, he considered absolutely wrong. He believed that it was necessary to part with the legacy of Stalinism gradually and deliberately, without noise and shouting, preparing every step

And

explaining its necessity. And the way it was done at the 20th, and then at the 20th congresses, he considered stupidity and adventurism. I think he had good reason to

think so. Indeed, since 1950, being a member of the Politburo of the PUWP Central Committee, he participated in discussions of international problems, traveling

as part of government delegations of the PPR to other socialist countries, negotiated with their leaders, and also participated in behind-the-scenes conversations.

And he could not fail to understand that, in principle, the entire system of that time rested on Stalin. Someone loved him, someone respected him, and someone (perhaps the majority) was afraid. Stalin was the backbone of the then socialist

system and, even when dead, continued to stabilize it. And when this rod was knocked out in 1956, the system fell apart. Rokossovsky was a supporter of the gradual dismantling of Stalinism. And what came to replace him was, from his point of view, so

small and

shabby, that involuntarily he, probably, mentally turned to the image of the leader and was convinced that there were no equals to him and never would be. I once asked my mother how my grandfather treated Khrushchev. The answer was: he thought Khrushchev was just a fool."

Of course, Rokossovsky did not openly express his attitude towards Khrushchev. At the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on October 28-29, 1957, at which Marshal Zhukov was removed from the post of Minister of Defense and removed from the Presidium of the Central Committee for "Bonapartism", Rokossovsky criticized Georgy Konstantinovich rather harshly:

"For the second time I have to be present during the analysis of the case concerning Comrade Zhukov: the first time after the end of the war, during the life of Stalin, and now the second time. For the first time, we all spoke, including myself, giving a completely objective assessment of Comrade Zhukov, pointing out his positive and negative sides ... His speech then was somewhat better than now, it was shorter, but then he openly admitted that yes, indeed, for me there were such errors. I became arrogant, I have a certain amount of vanity and ambition, and I gave my word that I would correct these mistakes ... Speaking of the correctness of the decision of the Party in relation to a person who does not

fulfilled

the will of the party, violated the instructions of the party ... I will say that I also consider myself in a well-known degrees guilty. And many of us in leadership positions should feel this

guilt. Comrade Zhukov was pursuing the wrong line... and it was our duty to members

party, to pay attention to this in a timely manner ... I blush, I am ashamed and hurt that I did not do this in a timely manner ... "

Rokossovsky also pointed to rudeness as a hallmark of Zhukovsky's style of work and recalled his clash with Georgy Konstantinovich during the battle for Moscow, directly opposing Stalin to Zhukov:

"The main drawback of Comrade. Zhukov during the war ... there was rudeness, consisting not only in

that he could offend a person, insult him, humiliate him. The administration of the Western Front at that time was not called otherwise, as the obscene administration. Instead of

the senior
boss in a conversation with his subordinates in a calm, confident voice encouraged, supported, we heard continuous obscenity and swearing with the threat
of execution. Such an episode was near Moscow, when I was directly at the front, where bullets whistled and shells exploded. At this time, Zhukov called me
to the VC and began to scold me with the most selective abuse, why the troops retreated one kilometer, threatened me with execution. I replied that I was directly at
the front, bullets were whistling, shells were exploding, I was not afraid of death, maybe in an hour I would be killed, so I ask you to look objectively. I had a completely
different conversation with Comrade Stalin. I assumed that I, as the commander of the 16th Army, would be scolded and believed that Stalin would be the same abuse,
immediately removed from work and shot. But I still have a warm, good memory of that conversation. Comrade Stalin calmly, without haste, asked to report the
situation. I started to tell in detail, but he cut me off and said - no need,

You
front commander, and I believe you. It's hard for you, we will help. It was a conversation of the commander, a man who himself takes into account the
situation in which we were.

As the chief inspector, Rokossovsky had to travel a lot around the country. I had to visit the places of former service. Colonel Alexander Zakharovich Lebedintsev met
with Rokossovsky

at the headquarters of the Transcaucasian Military District, when Rokossovsky was its commander for a short time. At the very first party meeting of the district
headquarters, dedicated to saving state funds, Rokossovsky spoke about a recent trip to the headquarters of the Far Eastern Military District.
Lebedintsev

recalled:

"Being the chief inspector - deputy minister of defense of the USSR, Rokossovsky arrived in the Far Eastern Military District and decided to go to
Blagoveshchensk, where the cavalry division he commanded was once stationed. The marshal, who arrived by helicopter, was met by the commander of the mechanized division, now stationed in well

familiar
Konstantin Konstantinovich military camp.

Rokossovsky, like a magnet, was drawn primarily to the building of the former stable, in which for many years

ago, his "personal" horses were kept - the horse Gromoboy and the mare Swallow. The following is the story of the commander almost verbatim:

"I went straight to the familiar stable. A door was opened for me in the casement of a wide gate.

But the

entire passage inside was now a corridor, plywood walls with the same plywood doors rose to the right and left. The floor was still earthen. Despite the passage of years, the room retained a persistent smell of urine, sweat, and horse harness.

I was immediately surrounded by the wives of lieutenants, sergeants and foremen of long-term service with infants in their arms

and asked to look into their closets, where the spouses slept on single iron beds, and older children on trestle beds.

There were no ceilings

windows

served as narrow slots in the walls, which were specially made in the stables so that the light would not beat

in the eyes of animals.

I listened to the complaints of young wives who connected their lives with the 'romance' of their husbands' garrison service.

The command of the division, lowering its eyes, repeated that all their applications from the district were answered by one thing:

there were no funds and materials for the conversion of stables into human housing, and here

they also showed documents with correspondence on this issue. I apologized to all the residents and left this stable hostel.

I was escorted to the "room" at the headquarters, intended for the visiting authorities, where, to calm down, I began to read the

newspapers. After a short time, I hear: chainsaws screeched, century-old pines began to fall with noise and crackle on the territory

of the military camp, the sawmill of the sapper battalion started working, and the sound of axes and hammers came from the stable.

By noon the next day, the division commander reported to me about the flooring, that the dormitory would soon have both ceilings

and normal windows. But the commander of the unit was most worried about the problem of cut down forest without an

outfit from above, albeit grown on the territory of the military camp itself. I had to assure the divisional commander that he would not receive any penalties ... ".

Rokossovsky told his colleagues in the Transcaucasian District and another instructive story. Once he was summoned

to the Kremlin for a regular meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The issue of non-fulfillment of

planned indicators by a number of industries was considered. They discussed from which of the ministries something could be taken

away in order to help those who were lagging behind.

The Minister of Culture Ekaterina Alekseevna Furtseva proposed to "pinch" the military, since they have higher salaries and more pensions than other citizens, and there are also benefits. Everyone was silent. Khrushchev announced a break for lunch.

"By pure chance," the marshal recalled, "I ended up at the table between Khrushchev and Furtseva. Nikita Sergeevich turned to me with a request to tell me about the situation in the troops, and I reported the above case from my last trip to the Far East. In the ensuing silence, Furtseva suddenly got up, left the table and left. Nikita Sergeevich shouted after her: "Well, Ekaterina Alekseevna, Rokossovsky pestered you. You will no longer 'pinch' the military."

The marshal also spoke about how Defense Minister Malinovsky asked him to personally visit the guard regiment of the Ministry of Defense and find out who

staffed officer positions there, although so

I must have known that almost exclusively the sons of generals and marshals serve there.

"I arrived at the regiment without notification," Rokossovsky recalled, "and not at the headquarters, but at one of the companies. The orderly gave the command

"Attention, foreman, go out!" The over-enlisted foreman clearly reported to me that the company was at the shooting range and asked me to go to the company

office. I shook hands with him and the orderly. In the office, I suddenly notice how a brave campaigner wiped away a tear. I ask: "What, foreman, did a mote get

into my eye?" He was embarrassed and answered like this: "Comrade Marshal, I have been a foreman in this company for ten years, and over the years not even

a single platoon lieutenant has shaken me

after mine

reports, but from you I was honored with a handshake. And the orderly will now tell the whole company that he was awarded the same ... "After these words, it immediately

became clear to me what the officers of the regiment were like. The Minister of Defense ordered: replace everyone!"

"And Rokossovsky then urged us not to boast of our shoulder straps," recalls A. 3. Lebedintsev, "especially during checks, to shake hands with each soldier if he is excellent

met the standard, coped with the task.

And here is another story related to Rokossovsky's activities as chief inspector of the Ministry of Defense. Army General M. A. Gareev recalled: "After the war, Deputy

Minister of Defense Rokossovsky arrived at the reserve command post at night for a command and staff exercise in the Belorussian district.

In heavy rain, we walked with him to the tent. Along the way, in the dark, Konstantin Konstantinovich caught on a carelessly laid telephone

wire and fell right into a puddle. Helping the marshal up, we expected the worst. But he quickly got up, laughed and said calmly: "During the war we used to bury

telephone wires. Probably, Zhukov would have reacted differently, and many of them with a much lower rank ... In this episode, the whole of Rokossovsky. Possession of such qualities is a peculiar and rather rare talent among great leaders.

In April 1962, Rokossovsky was sent on an honorable retirement - to the group of general inspectors of the Ministry of Defense. Rumors spread that the resignation was due to the fact that the marshal refused to participate in the campaign to expose Stalin's personality cult.

Konstantin

Indeed, Konstantinovich never made a public condemnation of Stalin. However, according to the grandson of Marshal Konstantin Vilyevich, the reason for the resignation was different. Shortly before this, the marshal inspected the Baltic Fleet and revealed gross violations in the rules for accepting warships from shipbuilders.

It turned out that the sailors accepted unfinished ships at the factories so that the workers could report on early delivery and receive bonuses. After signing the acceptance certificate, the ships were immediately docked and the defects were eliminated for several more months. This procedure for the acceptance of ships has existed since pre-war times with

silent

consent of the supervisory authorities. Thanks to such fraud, workers received additional material incentives in the form of bonuses. However, Rokossovsky is not without reason

suspected that a significant part of the bonus money was divided among the naval chiefs, directors of factories and high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Shipbuilding. It is possible that Rokossovsky was fired so as not to raise a fuss and not to wash dirty linen in public, because they knew that Konstantin Konstantinovich would not agree to hush up this matter.

But it is quite possible to assume that there were no specific reasons for Rokossovsky's resignation, but he was simply fired due to age, because he left the leadership of the armed forces generation

military leaders. Recall that by 1962, out of 14 marshals of the Soviet Union who commanded the fronts during the Great Patriotic War (Timoshenko, Voroshilov, Budyonny, Meretskov, Zhukov, Konev, Rokossovsky, Vasilevsky, Malinovsky, Tolbukhin, Govorov, Eremenko, Bagramyan, Golikov), on only three remained in active military service - Malinovsky, Meretskov and Bagramyan. By the way, at the same time as Rokossovsky, Marshal Konev was also sent to the group of general inspectors in April 1962, who was never suspected of refusing

criticize Stalin.

Soon, Marshal Filipp Ivanovich Golikov, a military leader very close to Khrushchev, also moved to inspectors. And Eremenko, who had a real friendship

with Khrushchev, was sent to the group of general inspectors back in 1958. I think that this was a natural process, connected, among other things, with

the technical re-equipment of the army and navy, which became nuclear-missile, and the experience of the last war no longer suited them.

Now Konstantin Konstantinovich lived the measured life of a pensioner, spent more time with his family and grandchildren, spent more time in nature and worked on his memoirs. According to the former adjutant Marshal B. N. Zakhatsky, "Rokossovsky loved brevity both in his memoirs and in life." But a serious

illness prevented me from completing my memoirs. The last chapters of the memoirs

wife and

the daughter was able to compose from drafts and previously written articles by Konstantin Konstantinovich for the Military History Journal and various collections

devoted to individual battles. A book of memoirs called "Soldier's Duty" was published a few months later.

after

marshal's death.

Other Soviet commanders, both during his lifetime and after his death, highly valued military

art and human qualities of Rokossovsky. So, Air Chief Marshal A. E. Golovanov

wrote in a review of the biography of Rokossovsky in the ZhZL series:

"If I were asked which commanders of the past I would put Rokossovsky next to, I would answer without hesitation: next to Suvorov and Kutuzov. Rokossovsky's

military leadership talent was truly unique, and it still awaits its researcher. The rare qualities of the character of K.K. Rokossovsky were so remembered

by everyone who ever saw him or spoke to him that they often occupy more space in the memoirs of contemporaries than

analysis

military art of Konstantin Konstantinovich ...

Perhaps Rokossovsky is the most colorful figure of all the front commanders that I had a chance to encounter during the Great Patriotic War.

His brilliant operations to defeat and liquidate more than three hundred thousandth army of Paulus, surrounded at Stalingrad, his defense, organized on

the Kursk Bulge with the subsequent defeat of the advancing enemy troops, the fighting of the troops led by him in the Belorussian

operations won him not only the glory of the great commander in our country, among our Soviet

people, but also made him world famous. It is hardly possible to name another surname of the commander who would have acted so successfully both in defensive and offensive operations of the past war.

Possessing the gift of foresight, he almost always accurately guessed the intentions of the enemy, preempting them, and, as a rule, emerged victorious.

All the materials on the Great Patriotic War have not yet been studied and raised, but we can say with confidence that when this happens, K.K. Rokossovsky will undoubtedly be at the head of our Soviet commanders ... "

P. I. Batov gives the following characterization of Rokossovsky, given by G. K. Zhukov:

"Rokossovsky was a very good boss. He brilliantly knew military affairs, clearly set tasks, intelligently and tactfully checked the execution of his orders. To subordinates showed constant

attention and, perhaps, like no one else, he knew how to evaluate and develop the initiative. He gave a lot to others and at the same time knew how to learn from his subordinates. I'm not talking about his rare spiritual qualities - they

known to everyone who served at least a little under his command ... And it is not surprising that Konstantin Konstantinovich rose to the rank of marshal, became an outstanding military leader. More thorough, efficient, hardworking and by and large gifted

man to me
hard to remember."

Among the front-line soldiers, the belief remained that Rokossovsky was much more humane

Zhukov didn't ruin people in vain. They sang about him during the war: "And didn't Rokossovsky hug him, tearing the order from his chest." There were no soldiers' songs about Zhukov.

"There is no worse crime in the Red Army, except for refusing to serve, like assault, that is, reducing the dignity of a person," Rokossovsky argued in his memoirs. Unlike Zhukov and many other Soviet military leaders, Konstantin Konstantinovich was never seen in the sin of assault.

If we compare Rokossovsky with two other "marshals of Victory", who are more often
Total
are mentioned along with it, then we have to admit that, at least from a formal point of view,

Konstantin Konstantinovich fought more successfully. He did not have a single defeat during the war, only successes. Zhukov, as Chief of the General Staff at the beginning of the war, undoubtedly bears his share of responsibility for the defeat of the Red Army in the border battles. In

addition, he had an unsuccessful operation "Mars" - an unsuccessful attack on the Rzhev-Vyazemsky bridgehead in November 1942 - January 1943.

Konev, being the commander of the Western Front, was one of the perpetrators of the Vyazemsky disaster in October 1941. Then, commanding the Western Front

autumn -

in the winter of 1942, Ivan Stepanovich failed in the implementation of Operation Mars, and then

missed the planned evacuation of the Rzhev-Vyazemsky bridgehead by the Germans, for which he was removed from

positions. Being immediately appointed commander of the Northwestern Front, Konev did not smog

liquidate the Demyansk group of Germans. Similar high-profile failures Rokossovsky in his

career did not know.

And what was Konstantin Konstantinovich like in private life? His daughter Ariadne recalled: "His whole life was a constant activity, he did not know

how to be at peace, did not like loafers, considering idleness one of the biggest vices. I often think about what fed

his

indestructible life force. First of all, natural enthusiasm - he simply could not do anything indifferently, without this very enthusiasm: whether he

played chess with his grandchildren, whether he worked on military works, sang or argued with his comrades. And, perhaps, sports, physical exercises, without

which he did not start the day. Father passionately loved nature, but not contemplative love. He could spend hours wandering through the

forest in search of mushrooms, patiently explaining to us the healing properties of various herbs, berries, he loved hunting and fishing, which he took

me with pleasure, if only I had the patience to wait for the biting to begin. He managed to pass on respect for nature to his grandchildren, especially

the younger one, in contact with whom he spent a lot of time in recent years.

a lot of time".

Ariadna Konstantinovna Rokossovskaya died in 1978 from a stroke. Later rumors that she shot herself with a captured Paulus pistol have no basis.

Rokossovsky's illegitimate daughter Nadezhda is an associate professor at MGIMO. Having married journalist Alexander Urban, she changed her last name, but then became Rokossovskaya again. The surname of the marshal was also preserved by his grandchildren Konstantin and Pavel, the children of Ariadna Konstantinovna. born in 1952

grandson Konstantin, a retired colonel, works at the Institute of Military Medicine. Another grandson, Pavel, is a lawyer. Great-granddaughter Ariadna is a journalist, great-grandson Roman is a student. And great-granddaughter Daria is still small.

In recent years, the self-proclaimed children of Rokossovsky have also appeared, about whom I do not want to write here. It is all too obvious that we are dealing with swindlers who seek to cash in on the Marshal's good name.

Rokossovsky's grandson Konstantin Vilyevich recalls:

"I became a military man looking at my grandfather. He served at the Institute of Aerospace Medicine. Having retired to the reserve, he remained there as a senior researcher. I model physical processes on the computer. Grandfather did not want me to be a military man, and my mother passionately desired this. She was very combative. During the war years, she strove for the front and broke through. She graduated from the school of partisan radio operators, and she, the only daughter of a marshal, was supposed to be sent behind enemy lines. But... they didn't. I think it's because of my grandfather. Remember the situation with Stalin's son, who was taken prisoner at the beginning of the war? The Germans tried blackmail them Stalin. I think my grandfather did not want a similar story to repeat itself with him. Mother worked at the central partisan hub, then she was transferred to a mobile hub at the Central Front - next to her grandfather. But not under his supervision - the headquarters was separate, the radio center - separately.

He often played scouts with us. We played on weekends at the dacha (we had a large area north of Moscow). We are with a neighbor-friend, on the one hand, grandfather - on the other. The task is to ambush, find and neutralize the enemy. We had toy guns. Once we are looking for a grandfather, we look: his cap is in the bushes. Let's go to her. We sneak, we sneak, and suddenly grandfather appears behind us: "Bah-bang, you are killed!" He outwitted us, hung his cap on a bush, and went in from the rear. Then he laughed at us. So, he said, they crawled wonderfully - it's a pity to stop '! ..

He was one of those people whom the whole country knew, and, of course, a glimpse of his glory fell on us - his relatives. I saw him on the podium of the Mausoleum during parades - in full dress and with orders, and my soul was filled with pride - this is my grandfather! Thanks to him, I could take a ride to the dacha in a "seagull". Grandfather always sat in the front seat, and drivers of oncoming cars recognized him

and welcomed. The school where I studied was next to the General Staff, and sometimes my mother asked my grandfather to take me to school. We walked down the street, he held my hand, and I was proud that I was walking with him, because passers-by smiled at us, said: "Hello, Konstantin

Konstantinovich!" - and he smiled and greeted in response. The guys at school came up and asked with admiration and envy: "Is it true that your grandfather is a marshal?" But, since we always lived together, he was not a great man for me and my younger brother Pavlik, but a loving grandfather, which he was probably all of us. He walked with me in the country along the alleys, explained where which tree grows, which birds live in our forest. He read books to me, played with me and

my friends in the war, you could play chess with him, go for mushrooms. He himself behaved so modestly, without sticking out either his titles or fame, that, imbued with this attitude, family members did not pay attention to his regalia. An ordinary grandfather, only a marshal.

"Grandfather loved sports," recalls Konstantin Vilyevich. - But I didn't consider myself a fan, I didn't like

competitions on TV, I wanted to participate. He generally liked outdoor activities, engaged in

sports. He loved to play volleyball and tennis, swam well, played billiards and never understood how you can watch sports competitions, "get sick". Football is not enough worried. I

I was surprised at this, and he treated it with humor. My father and I are watching the match, and he will come up from behind:

"Uh, they are watching Bashashkin again."

About the football player Bashashkin is a different story. The player had the third number. And instead of a man's question:

"Will you be third?" - then they asked: "Will you be Bashashkin?" Marshal knew him

with

the other side. During a trip to Poland, the football player got into some kind of scandalous story, and Rokossovsky himself rescued him.

And here is what Konstantin Vilyevich reports about how his grandfather rested:

"On vacation, he liked to go to the resort. This tradition has remained with his grandmother since the time of his service in the Far East.

Then, to change the situation, they had to go a long way. And in later years, the whole family went to Sochi, to Yalta. Even when grandfather was already sick and he was forbidden to rest in the south, he and his grandmother violated the ban, they simply went not in the height of summer, but in autumn. As for his free time, he spent it in the country. He did not shy away from any work: he helped to repair the fence, he loved to mow the grass. When did it happen

a large harvest of apples, we sawed out props with him and installed them under the branches of apple trees (which he same and planted). He had a small garden of his own, on which radishes, carrots, and various greens grew, he himself watered all this from a watering can and was insanely proud of the harvest.

There are many legends about the cottage. They said that there was such an anecdotal case - someone from local residents complained that Rokossovsky was building a palace. They began to check, for this even a special commission headed by N. A. Bulganin was created. When this commission arrived at the place, Bulganin looked at our dacha, took my grandfather aside and said: "Kostya, what kind of hut is this? Let's build you a normal stone house!" Grandfather refused. He believed that in his lifetime he

enough".

And the history of this dacha is as follows: General N. E. Subbotin, a member of the military council of the 2nd Belorussian Front, which his grandfather commanded at the end of the war, persuaded his grandfather, as well as the commander of the 4th Air Army K. A. Vershinin, chief of staff of Front A N. Bogolyubov, member of the military advice of A. G. Russians and the former front commander G. F. Zakharov to build dachas together. They were given land not far from Tarasovka near Moscow. And in order not to spend a lot of time and money on this, because they built something at their own expense, they simply transported several identical log houses from the complex of buildings of the headquarters of the 2nd Belorussian Front. In Germany, these houses were dismantled, transported to the Moscow region, and there the captured Germans quickly assembled them. When the cottage was built, the Soviet government presented her grandfather, namely, reimbursed the costs of transportation and assembly. Unfortunately, in 1993 this dacha was burned down by local hooligans.

Konstantin Vilyevich admits:

"In our family, it is not customary to use a surname. I didn't have job privileges. And my grandfather didn't like it. He was a very humble person. During the parades, he stood on the podium in the second row. I went to work on foot. The General Staff is on Frunze Street, and we lived nearby, on Granovsky Street. Sometimes I went with him. He brought me to school, she was on the way, then went to work. People recognized him and smiled. He greeted everyone like they were old friends. Was polite. One military historian, now famous, told me that they were students, knowing that Rokossovsky was walking along this lane, they specially ran away from classes in order to meet him. past

we pass: "Hello, Konstantin Konstantinovich!" He always answers: "Hello" ...

Yes, my grandfather treated people democratically. On the front line, he could approach a soldier, ask how he lives, what difficulties. He was loved by the troops and they were not afraid, like others, they did not try to avoid him. He never had the attitude "I am the boss, you are the fool".

Our family lived in the house where many famous military leaders settled after the war. Mom said that at that time grandfather was very rarely at home, only on vacation and on holidays. He liked to visit the dacha, and my first memories of my grandfather belong to the dacha period. I was then four years old. I remember very well how we went with him for mushrooms. ie

It was a real mushroom picker. Then I could not understand how my grandfather finds mushrooms under a bunch of leaves or needles. He literally felt where mushrooms should grow. Usually, in the forest, grandfather put on some old jacket, simple canvas trousers and, of course, a cap.
such

it was hardly possible to recognize the famous commander in his appearance. In our travels through the forest, I was most surprised by my grandfather's ability to navigate. I remember wandering far into the forest, and I was getting scared. Then I pulled him by the skirts of his jacket and, trembling all over, asked: "Grandfather, are we going to get lost?" And he will press me to him and, smiling, says: "Don't be afraid, I know where to go ..." And indeed, after 10 minutes we were already going to some path or clearing.

My grandfather tried to teach me how to navigate, but I never learned this science. But in mushrooms, he still taught me to understand. After all, at first I collected those that were prettier and brighter: some kind of fly agaric, a little green toad. It used to happen that I would pick up a basket of this "beauty", and grandfather would laugh: "These are the wrong mushrooms, Kostya, the wrong ones." And let me tell you which mushrooms you can take. True, I was still drawn to bright fly agaric for a long time.

He generally had his own, special principle of non-interference in the process of raising grandchildren. He

he never punished me, but he informed his mother about all my misdeeds. But my grandfather expressed his dissatisfaction with my behavior or resentment by silence. Once, when I was already 14 years old, such an incident happened. My grandfather had an encyclopedia of Brockhaus and Efron, which was rare for those times - all 82 main volumes and four additional ones. He used it often, loved

leaf through. And somehow

I looked through one of the volumes, and then left it somewhere in a conspicuous place. The book was stolen by my younger brother, who was then four years old, and, while playing, painted some map in the encyclopedia with colored pencils. Grandfather, seeing these works of art (and he knew that I read this volume), stopped talking to me, and asked my mother to conduct an educational conversation with me. But I insisted that I was innocent. This epic lasted for five days (all this time my grandfather did not talk to me), until, finally, my brother admitted that he was the one who did the naughty. Then the grandfather - here we must give him his due - in front of everyone said: "I was wrong! I'm sorry, Kostya, I didn't understand. We were both very happy with this reconciliation.

Despite his busyness, grandfather tried to devote every free minute to us, grandchildren. Most of all we loved, of course, to play war.

Despite his age, grandfather, like a teenager, climbed with us

bushes, hid in ambushes, ran through the forest. He carved machine guns and pistols for us from wood. I had a comrade at the dacha, with whom we usually fought against my

grandfather. I remember once it was my grandfather's turn to lie in wait.

So my friend and I went looking for him. We look - the cap sticks out in the bushes. Ah, we think we got it. lay down

on the stomach and crawl quietly, sneaking up. Suddenly we hear from behind: "Bang-bang, you are killed!" It turned out that grandfather deceived

us: he hung his cap in one place, and hid himself in the neighboring bushes. Then he chuckled: "Eh, are-e-eaters ..." But not evil, but in a good way. Grandpa loved us

did not allow

no rudeness towards us. If something happened to us, I was very worried.

Once my younger brother got hurt because of him. It was at the cottage. As usual at the beginning of summer, when the garden was overgrown with

young grass, grandfather mowed it down. He loved to mow. Then someone called him to

house. He left the scythe in the grass. And this must happen: a five-year-old brother ran into the tip of a scythe. He severely cut his leg.

There was a lot of

blood. At first they even thought

What

ligaments are damaged. The grandfather was the first to come running to the crying of the child. I remember this picture: he walks all pale and carries in his

arms my sobbing brother with a bloody leg. Doctors who arrived on call treated the wound, which turned out to be deep, but not dangerous, and prescribed bed

rest. Grandfather, feeling guilty, devoted all his free time to his brother. He sat by his bed, looked after him, read books, played soldiers with him ...

In his free time, grandfather was not averse to digging in the ground in a small garden in the country. During his summer vacation, he carried out a vigorous activity there: he planted radishes, onions, dill, parsley. He himself weeded everything, fertilized, watered, did not like it when someone helped him. He only agreed to help him dig up a garden bed in the spring, but no, no. Only we, grandchildren, could help grandfather, yes

and then on trifles.

He also liked to take care of the big old garden. In the harvest year, it happened that the branches to the ground

bent from fruit. And grandfather, a generous soul, gave them to all his friends, pouring a bucket, or even a bag of apples. After all, we didn't cook jam from apples, they didn't like it in our family. But

we always had a lot of cherry and raspberry. Grandfather loved raspberry very much, and my mother bought raspberries and made jam especially for him ... "

It must be said that Rokossovsky was a passionate hunter. Go hunting most of the time

With

front-line friend - General Konstantin Fedorovich Telegin. He taught his grandson to this occupation:

"I will never forget how my grandfather prepared for the hunt. It was a whole ritual. The most interesting thing is that grandfather always made cartridges for hunting himself. Of course, he also used purchased ones, but he said, what is it

all the old hunters did. In principle, this is a simple matter, however, extreme accuracy and perseverance are needed. Grandfather bought shells, capsules,

gunpowder, shot - he had a whole set of special devices to weigh out gunpowder, insert capsules, clamp the shell. I often helped my grandfather in this

and was insanely proud of the trust placed in me. True, I was not enough for a long time - this is a very tricky occupation. And most importantly, you can't make

a mistake: if you pour two portions of gunpowder, the gun will break. But grandfather never had such cases, and he could pore over cartridges for hours.

I made fifty or sixty pieces, so that it would be enough for the season. After all, he didn't need much - he shot very well! My father, who often went hunting

with my grandfather, told me about a curious incident. They went to the ducks somehow. And my grandfather had his own principle: never shoot at a stationary

target. To hunt ducks, specially camouflaged barrels were usually placed on the lake, in which hunters hid and watched the game through small holes. They sat

down

in barrels, my father recalled, waiting. And then he sees that in front of the barrel where the grandfather was hiding, a huge drake sat down. The father thinks: now he will slam him here. But the grandfather does not shoot. A couple of minutes passed, the grandfather got out of the barrel, took off his cap and let's scare the drake. At the same second, the bird broke off the surface of the water. Then the grandfather fired and of course hit.

But he went to ducks only in the last years of his life, when he was already old. And before that he went to wolves, elks, wild boars. Once, when he went to the wild boar, a funny story happened to him, which he himself told me.

There was a hunt with a paddock: the arrows stood in ambush, and the huntsmen drove the beast. And suddenly a huge boar jumped out right in front of the grandfather. It is good that the grandfather did not lose his head and at the same second shot at the beast almost point-blank. True, there was no reaction - the boar remained standing. Grandfather had no time to recharge - the animal moved towards him. Grandfather quickly got his bearings and, despite the years, climbed a tree in the blink of an eye. The boar jumped up to the tree, stopped, froze for a few minutes, and then collapsed dead. As it turned out later, the grandfather nevertheless hit the beast, but because of the very strong frontal bone of the boar, from which sometimes the bullets bounce off, the animal did not die immediately from a wound. So he drove his grandfather up a tree.

Something, but he appreciated real hunting rifles. He had two favorites and, as they say, fighting ones: the German horizontal double-barreled shotgun Sauer, which he brought from Germany after the war, and the English Holland-Gold - someone's gift. They gave him a lot of guns. Grandfather even had a special cabinet for them, one gun more beautiful than the other: with silver and gold chasing, carving and inlay. But as far as I know, he did not like these expensive guns, did not specially collect them and never used them for hunting. By the way, he did not like shotguns with a vertical arrangement of barrels, preferring the classic horizontal shotguns. As for expensive weapons, he gave them as gifts. I know that he presented his adjutant with an expensive inlaid gun, which was presented to him as a token of respect by the Minister of Defense of Hungary. He did not consider these guns valuable, besides, he knew that he would never use them.

According to Konstantin Vilyevich, Rokossovsky's friends in the last 12 years of his life, which he spent in the USSR, remained his combat associates - Lieutenant General Konstantin Telegin, Army General Pavel Batov, Army General Mikhail Malinin, Marshal of Artillery

Vasily

Kazakov, with whom he went through almost the entire war. He probably already considered himself Russian. But, as one Polish general, a

colleague of Rokossovsky, recalled, when he arrived in

composition

Polish delegation to Moscow to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic

war, then at a reception in the Kremlin he addressed all Russians in Russian. When the turn came to introduce himself to

Rokossovsky, he exclaimed in the presence of members of the Politburo: "I'm a Pole! Why are you talking to me in Russian! Speak to me

in Polish!" But it is unlikely that at that moment he

felt like a Pole. He just wanted to once again emphasize his

independence.

Marshal's grandson Konstantin Rokossovsky recalls his grandfather:

"He loved to give gifts. In the early sixties, when the Beatles were in vogue, my grandfather gave me a guitar. An ordinary

domestic six-string guitar, but for me, a thirteen-year-old teenager, it was the ultimate dream! A little later, my grandfather presented me

with a pneumatic gun, deciding to introduce me to hunting. And on my fourteenth birthday (June 17, 1966. - B.S.) he handed me

his saber, with which he hosted the Victory Parade in 1945. I remember that a large table was laid then, a lot of guests gathered.

And when everyone had already distributed gifts, grandfather entered the room, holding a saber in outstretched arms, and

solemnly handed it over. For me then it was a truly luxurious gift! True, then I almost lost it: with the neighbor guys, who were simply

bursting with envy, we rushed to chop nettles with this parade saber. Grandfather noticed that we were disgraceful, and strictly

said: "If I see you again, I'll take it away."

Handing the saber to his grandson, Konstantin Konstantinovich said: "Well, Kostya, you are big now, take it and keep it. God forbid you

never have to strip her!" It was his last gift to his grandson. Konstantin Konstantinovich gave his saber to his grandson less than a

year before his death, when he was already seriously ill and understood that he did not have long to live.

As Konstantin Vilyevich points out,

"Grandfather was characterized by sophistication in everything. I know that he loved good cognacs and even in his old age he could not

deny himself a glass of this drink. What he hated was beer. AND,

as far as I can tell, my grandfather was not prone to bad habits. He drank little and smoked a little (mostly domestic Kazbek cigarettes).

And in recent years, when his health began to be naughty, he used a mouthpiece ... Grandfather was very attached to his family and home. When he returned from Poland and

went to work in the Ministry of Defense of the USSR, he always came home for lunch. A
then became

walk, because we lived nearby. My mother said that, after returning from Poland, my grandfather said: "It's nice to be at home, I'm resting here, because I can calmly walk down the street alone." Abroad, my grandfather had a very powerful guard. You can't even go to the toilet without an escort. And in the Soviet Union, grandfather's protection was purely symbolic. And often, going to work, grandfather accompanied me to school. I held his hand and was insanely proud of it."

Here it should be noted that, as we remember, the protection for Rokossovsky in Poland was by no means an extra precaution. Not all Poles treated him with sympathy, and Konstantin

Konstantinovich in Poland there were several assassination attempts.

Konstantin Vilyevich refutes a number of legends that exist about the marshal. For example, statements that "Rokossovsky carried an icon with him, prayed for it." The marshal's grandson categorically states: "I know that my grandfather was absolutely indifferent to religion - the son of his time, an atheist. But non-belligerent. For example, on Easter we baked Easter cakes, painted eggs. He treated this with humor, although he loved Easter cakes, like pies.

Interestingly, exactly the same legend about the icon also exists about Marshal Zhukov. I think that it is just as unreliable as the similar legend about Rokossovsky, it has nothing to do with reality. Zhukov was exactly the same son of his time and an atheist - in

in any case, until old age, when many people think about death and the afterlife.

Konstantin Vilyevich admits:

"I was brought up in strictness, it was not customary for us to boast of a surname. Although I remember as in

An interesting incident happened in second grade. Once our class participated in cleaning the school

yard, we dug, planted trees, and, of course, I, along with everyone else, was busy in the yard. And here for

one of the children's parents came, and I heard them say: "Look, the grandson of the marshal, and with

with a shovel and also digs ... "In their understanding, the grandson of the marshal had to be a white hand. But we were brought up differently, accustomed to work and order. For example, I knew that grandfather was not very

likes when his things were taken without permission. And when grandfather himself offered to see or wear something, it was perceived by me as a gift.

I remember once I go into the bedroom, I look: my grandfather's uniform with orders is hanging - he was going to the parade. Grandfather, smiling, asked: "Do you want to wear it?" Well, of course, I agreed. I was then eight or nine years old. Grandfather put on me a uniform with orders, and ... I could hardly stand on my feet - it was so heavy. Then for a long time I was still surprised how my grandfather wears it.

Rokossovsky was awarded two Stars of the Hero of the Soviet Union, seven Orders of Lenin, six Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Victory, the Order of the October Revolution, the Orders of Suvorov and Kutuzov of the 1st degree, the Polish Order of Virtuti Military with a star and the Cross of Grunwald of the 1st degree, Polish Order of "Builders of People's Poland", French Order of the Legion of Honor, French Military Cross, American Order of the Legion of Honor degree

commander-in-chief, the Mongolian orders of Sukhe-Bator and the Red Banner of War. He was the only Soviet general to be awarded the Knight's Cross of the British Order of the Bath. In addition, the marshal was awarded many medals. Among his awards is the Honorary

weapons with a golden image of the State Emblem of the USSR.

Konstantin Vilyevich recalled:

"Once my grandfather decided to teach me how to shoot with a small-caliber sports pistol Walter, which was presented to him by the gunners of the Polish Army. Needless to say, I've been waiting for this day.

And so we studied this gun inside and out, I was instructed - how to hold, How

take aim, what can and cannot be done, and swore an oath to his grandfather not to indulge and be careful.

At the same time, he told me:

"If there is a misfire or even some kind of hitch, hold the gun with the barrel up and don't fuss, we'll figure it out together." We fixed a

target on the fence, retreated about thirty meters. Grandfather loaded a clip and fired a few trial shots: making sure that

everything was in order with the pistol, he handed it to me. I aim, as he said, shoot once, twice, and then, deciding that it would be time to go and see what the result is, I lower

gun down. A

his descent was very soft - after all, the pistol was sporty. A shot rang out and the bullet entered

the ground next to my foot. I was confused, realizing that I had made an unforgivable mistake, and it is still unknown how this whole story would have ended - after all, the pistol was self-loading, and the next cartridge was already in the chamber. Grandfather, without saying a word, very calmly but firmly took the pistol out of my hand and only then said in an icy tone: "That's it. Your shooting is over for today! I told you what not to do in any case. Next time you will listen to your grandfather more carefully." I cannot describe how upset I was by this embarrassment.

Now, recalling this case, I involuntarily compare the behavior of my grandfather with the behavior in similar situations of some officers. It seems to me that it is precisely for this ability in a critical situation without fuss, to calmly and prudently make a decision and tactfully and gently, without humiliating human shouting and scolding, to help him get out of a difficult situation, and his subordinates loved his grandfather, from an ordinary to a general.

According to the grandson of the marshal, Rokossovsky once had a captured all-wheel drive Steyr, which Field Marshal Paulus once rode:

"According to the stories of the grandfather himself, it was a luxurious car. Then the Americans gave him at least chic Buick. We had the car until 1962, after which my grandfather handed it over to the AHO of the Ministry of Defense and received a brand new ZIM. Grandfather was indifferent to such things. Almost the only relic left after him is a military Jeep. I restored it. Collectors offered to sell it to me, promised a lot of money, but I will never sell this car.

Surprisingly, my grandfather did not drive, although he tried to learn. But this only happened once. Grandfather said that when he was in Transbaikalia, he and his comrades went hunting in the steppe.

You go, you go along the steppe, as if on a flat road, the soil is solid. And then someone suggested that he learn how to drive a car. The grandfather sat behind the wheel and drove, crashing somewhere is impossible. And everything went well until, in some incredible way, the grandfather drove into a small beam, probably the only one in the entire steppe. And he drove in such a way that he broke the front axle of the car. Since then, he has never driven again."

The fate of another car, on which the marshal had a chance to drive almost the entire war, is interesting. This is a "Chevrolet-division-correspondent-flip-master", 1937, delivered to the Soviet Union in November 1941 from the USA under Lend-Lease. In 1941-1947 Chevrolet

was

Rokossovsky's personal car, and then the marshal gave it to his former driver. This car was specially created for army needs.

Part of its body and the bottom are armored. Chevrolet is still on the move and can reach speeds of up to 215 kilometers per

hour. Rokossovsky's car was rented for filming by Soviet film studios. In particular, he appeared on the screen in

cult television movie "Seventeen Moments of Spring". There, American intelligence officer Allen Dulles rides on it.

Konstantin Vilyevich recalled:

"He was loved. Everyone loved it - from members of the Politburo and marshals to adjutants, drivers and rangers.

For our

family, he was the center, attracting both relatives and friends of my parents, and even my friends - the children were drawn into

his orbit. He had an extraordinary smile. When something did not work out, he could turn to me and say with such a childish,

discouragingly shy smile: "Well, brother, you see, grandfather has misled." Many years later, I watched newsreel footage taken during

the Battle of Moscow, in which he, sternly frowning, against the backdrop of formidable battle scenery, tells about the advance of

our troops. Suddenly he raises his head, and I see this shy smile: "Well, they say, the devil said something here ..."

And only

now I understand how difficult it was through a long life, barracks, wars, arrests to carry this smile. Despite the honors and glory,

he remained a shy and modest person until his death. When we watched parades on TV with the whole family, we could hardly find

our grandfather, the Deputy Minister of Defense, somewhere on the very edge, and often in the second row of the tribune

for the military. Sometimes I heard him say to his grandmother, who asked him for something: "But, Lulu, this is inconvenient!"

Our family was no different from any other Soviet family. So what, that grandfather is a marshal? We have always had a very

democratic atmosphere in our house. He terribly disliked it when one of the guests, having drunk too much, began to proclaim toasts

to Rokossovsky, to courage and military genius. Immediately reminded on what occasion they had gathered. The family generally had a cult of modesty. It was a shame to stand out with something, although I will not hide, there was

such an opportunity.

The marshal had a sick heart. But he died of prostate cancer. Burned out within six months.

On March 3, 1968, five months before his death, probably already feeling that he did not have long to live, Rokossovsky wrote to his grandchildren:

"Hello dear grandchildren Pavlik and Kotya! Grandfather has already drapanul from the hospital and I am sitting at home, while I am still on hospital regime. He received an honorary weapon such as a cuirassier saber, beautifully finished, with a large protective hilt and with a coat of arms resembling an overcoat button. Yesterday, he introduced himself to those who had gathered for the celebration with us, saluting in accordance with all the rules of cavalry art. Now my grandmother and I are again sitting together and silently feel our

loneliness. No one is chasing the puck along the corridors and oppressive silence reigns. But for now and all.

We kiss you hard, as well as mom and dad. Write, do not forget the old people.

Grandfather".

"I didn't catch his last days - we lived in Novosibirsk, I took exams at school, I was 16," recalls Konstantin Vilyevich. — Arrived at the very end. He was admitted to the hospital

my parents didn't take me there. It was hard. Especially the funeral process. Painful

setting... I saw people crying as they stood in line to say goodbye to him. Brezhnev also wept, quite sincerely. Grandfather evoked sympathy for everyone ...

When he was hospitalized again in 1968, the family already knew that his days were numbered.

I remember that a week before my grandfather's death, my mother brought me to the Kremlin hospital, where he lay.

Grandpa barely spoke. But I remember his last words: "Take care of your parents, study so that in life you will not be a burden to anyone." Soon he was gone.

Farewell took place in the House of the Soviet Army - now the House of the Russian Army. There the ritual was worked out:

a coffin was put up, a guard of honor stepped in... All the time while the farewell ceremony was going on, my grandmother, mother and father were sitting in the hall. I was also with my family, although not for so long. On the first day, members of the government, the military and, as they said then, other officials said goodbye to the grandfather. I remember that Brezhnev was the only one out of all the leadership at that time who openly cried. In general, he is said to have been a sensitive person. Leonid Ilyich came up to us and hugged everyone tightly.

On the second day, the grandfather's body was cremated, and ordinary people could say goodbye to his ashes. There were so many people that members of the government raised the issue of extending the farewell ceremony for another day. But then they nevertheless decided not to violate traditions, and the urn with the ashes was buried in the Kremlin wall. I remember that when it was all over, Alexei Nikolaevich Kosygin came up to us and asked my grandmother: where is Rokossovsky's grandson? When they showed me to him, Kosygin put his arm around my shoulders and said: "Hold on, son. And be like your grandfather." I still don't understand why he turned to me..."

One of Rokossovsky's closest friends, General of the Army Pavel Ivanovich Batov, wrote:

"Later I had the opportunity to work with Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky for many years. Now he is no longer among us. It's hard to write about it. I bow my head before his bright memory.

I am infinitely grateful to him for everything that my military service under his leadership has enriched me with.

I remember our last meeting in the hospital a few days before his death. We both knew we would never see each other again. The layout of his book "Soldier's Duty" was just brought from the Military Publishing House, on which he was already seriously ill. Konstantin Konstantinovich signed the book in

seal and told me:

"I can't send you the author's copy anymore. But consider that you have received it," and added: "I really wanted to write my memoirs about the civil war, I regret that I didn't have time ... I wanted nothing more than to write about the civil war, about the feat of the revolutionary workers and peasants. What wonderful people they are, and what a joy it is to be in their ranks!

Yes, he himself was a soldier of the revolution ... "

Konstantin Konstantinovich died in the Kremlin hospital on August 3, 1968. He was buried in the Kremlin wall. Rokossovsky himself objected to this, but no orders

about
did not leave his funeral during his lifetime.

In today's Poland, he was almost forgotten, but the Russians remember and still feel grateful to one of the saviors of Moscow in 1941 and the victors of Nazi Germany in

1945 And, of course, Rokossovsky remained in the memory of the people as the most humanly

handsome of the Soviet marshals. Konstantin Konstantinovich had to exist in the conditions of a totalitarian system - harsh, suspicious, which did not highly value human life.

But he managed to fit into this system in such a way that, having achieved high ranks and awards, having accomplished great military deeds, he did not lose his sense of honor and dignity. Eternal memory to him!

APPLICATION

Head of the Secretariat of the Minister of National Defense of the Polish People's Republic - Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defense of the Polish People's Republic Marshal Comrade. Rokossovsky Konstantin Konstantinovich.

Warsaw 6.7. 1953
Memorandum

Fulfilling your instruction on the issue of finding out the date, place of birth and death of your parents, by visiting the place, we managed to establish the following:

1. Your grandfather, Vincenty Rokossovsky, lived in 1853 in the village of Zemki, Baranovo parish, former Pshasnyshsky district. Lomzhinsky province., Now Warsaw Voivodeship. In 1853 he was 26 years old, so he was born in 1827. It was not possible to establish the grandfather's place of birth. In the village Z&mki grandfather lived, in all likelihood, until 1856-1857. From 1858 to 1871 he alternately lived in the village. Stokie and Popelyarnya, he worked as a forester in

forests

landowner Komarov, and after their nationalization he worked in state forests. year and place

grandfather's death was also not possible to establish. The wife of Vincenta Rokossovsky, and your grandmother, Konstantia Rokossovsky, from the Holevitskys' house, lived with your grandfather in the places mentioned above until 1871 and was, in all likelihood, a housewife.

2. The family of your grandfather - Vincenty Rokossovsky, as follows from the attached documents, consisted of the following persons:

1) Rokossovsky Ksaveri-Yuzef, born on March 19, 1853 (in the memorandum of Ksaver Yuzef Rokossovsky attached to the memorandum, it was noted that he was baptized on March 8/20, 1853. - B.S.) in the village. Zemki, Baranovo volosts, Shpasnyshsky district. 6. Lomzhinsky province.,

now Warsaw Voivodeship.

2) Rokossovskaya Vladislava Yuanna, who was born on December 27, 1858 in the village. Zemki.

3) Rokossovsky Alexander-Apollinaris, born on July 23, 1858. in the village Stock (here, undoubtedly, there is some confusion in the dates, since Vladislava and Alexander could not have been born in the same year. Perhaps Vladislava was born in 1856. - B.S.).

4) Rokossovsky Konstantin-Vincenty, who was born on February 4, 1860 in the village. Popular. 5) Rokossovsky Mikhail-Peter, born on October 18, 1861 in the village. Popular.

6) Rokossovsky Franciszek-Yan, who was born on April 2, 1863 in the village. Popular.

7) Rokossovskaya Maria Constance, who was born on July 19, 1864 in the village. Popular. 8) Rokossovskaya Sophia-Helena, who was born on December 29, 1866 in the village. Popular. 9) Rokossovsky Stanislav Yan, born on June 23, 1871 in the village. Stocks.

This cuts off any information about the further fate of the grandfather and his family in the areas mentioned above (the list of children of Vincenty Rokossovsky does not include Stefania Rokossovskaya, who, obviously, was born after 1871 in some other village or city. - B.S.).

2. Your father, Rokossovsky Xaveri-Yuzef, was born on March 19, 1853 in the village. zemki, volosts

Baranovo, Pshasnyshsky district, former. Lomzhinsky province., Now Warsaw Voivodeship. He died on October 17, 1902,

in Warsaw, in the Prague Hospital, and was buried at the Brudnovsky cemetery (date of burial - October 20, 1902, according to

a certificate issued by the office of the Brudnovsky cemetery. - B.S.). All documents related to the death of Rokossovsky

Xavier are stored in the office of the Brudnovsky cemetery and in the church of St. Florian in Prague (in the death certificate,

Xavier Jozef Rokossovsky was called a "private official". Usually they called

estate managers, butlers, butlers, etc. - B.S.). Your father lived in the mountains before his death. Warsaw, on the street. Stalova, 5.

Get any information about your father's family during this time

was not possible due to the fact that these data were destroyed during the German occupation. After his death, my father

left his wife, your mother - ROKOSSOVSKYA Atonida (Antonina), whose maiden name was OVSYANNIKOVA.

When leaving for Velikiye Luki to obtain a birth certificate for you, as well as to collect any information about your father's family,

it was not possible, since the data for 1896

according to

Velikiye Luki have not been preserved. According to the statement of the head of the Regional Police Department for the Velikoluksky region, police colonel KORSHUNOV and from the stories of some old people who previously worked in the railway workshops of the mountains. Velikiye Luki, your father really worked during this period as a worker in the named workshops.

As Colonel Korshunov stated, a birth certificate for your father can be obtained at the Central Police Department (there Rokossovsky was in for a failure. According to a certificate dated June 24, 1953, issued to K.K. V. Luka for 1895-96 is not available. Checked for 7 years. "- B. S.).

In the mountains Velikie Luki installed your bust on the square opposite the city theater. I enclose a photograph of the bust on a marble pedestal. Bust sculptor Aguzur. The bust is cast from bronze in mountains. Leningrad.

APPENDIX: Mentioned in the text on 13 sheets.

Colonel S. Gudovich (signature).

ILLUSTRATIONS

Warsaw during the childhood of Kostya Rokossovsky

Konstantin at 18

-At the grave of Rokossovsky's sister Helena with a changed date of birth

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s. From the plate on the coffin it follows that the deceased was born in 1896 m. And:

Rokossovsky (center) with uncle Konstantin (first from left) and his two sons - Pavel and Vincenty

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Commander of the 35th Cavalry Regiment Rokossovsky (second from left in the second row) with their fighters. 1921

With wife Julia. 1926

Rokossovsky in Transbaikalia. 1931

On the courses of red commanders in Moscow. 1929

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After being released from prison. 1940

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In the famous prison "Crosses" Rokossovsky spent almost three years

Commander of the 16th Army Rokossovsky and his subordinates during the fighting near Volokolamsk b >

German equipment abandoned during the retreat from Moscow

G. K. Zhukov

L. A. Govorov

R. Ya. Malinovsky

With comrades-in-arms - Generals M. S. Malinin and A. A. Lobachev

Om 1 of the 6th Army. Summer 1942

Erich von Manstein

Heinz Guderian

Hans von Kluge

Rokossovsky and General N. N. Voronov interrogate Field Marshal Paulus, captured near Stalingrad

Street fighting in Stalingrad

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"Nick; No. 53 fields ye Segikaa Azik," (I Yultye bro) —==
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after the Battle of Stalingrad, Rokossovsky became known far beyond the borders of the USSR. spring

In 1943, his portrait appeared on the cover of the American Time magazine.

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Rokossovsky and his friend - General P. I. Batov

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In the snowy Don steppe

Rokossovsky rises in a balloon to view the theater of operations

With and I. G. Zakharkin and K. F. Telegin. "4

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With wife Yulia Petrovna and daughter Ariadna

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Rokossovsky and Batov at the location of the 65th Army during the days of Operation Bagration

Victorious May 1945. Rokossovsky with soldiers of the 2nd Belorussian Front

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Meeting with British Field Marshal B. Montgomery

Rokossovsky before the Victory Parade in Moscow

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Zhukov and Rokossovsky host the Victory Parade

The beginning of a peaceful life. Marshals Govorov, Rokossovsky, Konev and Meretskov with People's Artist of the USSR R. N. Simonov

Rokossovsky with his comrades-in-arms - General N. S. Oslikovsky ...

... and General A. N. Bogolyubov

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Certificate issued to Rokossovsky after his appointment as Minister of Defense of Poland

The only marshal in history of two armies - Soviet and Polish

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Rokossovsky with his family in Poland. 1948

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At the maneuvers of the Polish Army

Zhukov and Rokossovsky in 1956. The relationship between the two "Marshals of Victory" has always been difficult

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Chief military inspector of the Ministry of Defense Rokossovsky in the Northern Fleet. 1962
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Marshal with grandchildren

7

Mountain from the shadow of Ariadna in the Crimea

Funeral of Rokossovsky. Moscow, August 5, 1968

MARSHAL
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Monument to Marshal in Zelenograd near Moscow

MAIN DATES OF THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF K. K. ROKOSVSKY

1894 (or 1896), December 8/20 - in Warsaw, in the family of the railway auditor Xavier Jozef Rokossovsky and his wife Antonina (Atonida), nee Ovsyannikova, the son Konstantin, baptized in Orthodoxy, was born.

1909-1914 - worked in the stone-cutting workshop of his uncle Stefan Vysotsky in Warsaw, and then in the town of Gruets, 35 kilometers southwest of Warsaw.

1914, August 2 - enters the hunter (volunteer) in the 5th Kargopol Dragoon regiment.

August 8 - distinguished himself during reconnaissance near the village of Yastrzhem, for which on October 28 he was awarded the St. George Cross of the 4th degree and promoted to corporal.

1915, July 20 - awarded the St. George medal of the 4th degree for distinction in battles near shtetl

Traskuns.

1916, May 25 - was awarded the St. George medal of the 4th degree for the second time for distinction during

reconnaissance search. In order to change the order, according to the existing procedure, a medal of the 3rd degree was awarded.

October - sent to the regimental training team.

1917, March 29 - at the end of the training team, he was promoted to junior non-commissioned officer.

September 26 - for successful reconnaissance near the town of Kronenberg, he was presented with the St. George medal of the 2nd degree, which he was awarded on November 21.

December 15 - joined the Kargopol Red Guard detachment.

1918, March 21 - by order of the 5th Kargopol Dragoon Regiment, from March 18, excluded from the lists of the regiment among the dragoons "transferred to the Vologda military department and enrolled in Red Army".

On October 3, he was appointed assistant chief of the Kargopol cavalry detachment and squadron commander of the 15th cavalry regiment.

1919, March 7 - became a member of the RCP (b), party card number 5239. On April - appointed assistant commander of the consolidated Ural name of Volodarsky shelf.

T May - appointed commander of the 2nd Ural separate division named after Volodarsky.

November 4 - for the capture of an enemy battery in a battle near the village of Vakorinskoye, he was presented with the Order of the Red Banner, which he was awarded on April 4, 1920.

November 7 - wounded in the right shoulder in the battle near the village of Karaulnaya, Ishim district, Tobolsk province.

January 23, 1920 - appointed commander of the 30th Cavalry Regiment of the 30th Infantry Division. August 8 - appointed commander of the 35th cavalry regiment of the 35th rifle division. February 1921 - The 35th cavalry regiment was reorganized into the 35th separate cavalry division.

June 2 - seriously wounded in the leg in a battle with a brigade of the Asian Division under the command of General B.P. Rezhukhin near the village of Zhelturinskaya on the outskirts of Troitskosavsk. In this battle, Rokossovsky saved an infantry battalion from death with a counterattack, for which he was awarded the second Order of the Red Banner.

October - appointed commander of the 3rd brigade of the 5th Kuban cavalry division.

1922, October - in connection with the reorganization of the 5th Kuban Cavalry Division into a separate 5th Kuban cavalry brigade was appointed commander of the 27th cavalry regiment of this brigade.

1923, April 30 - married Yulia Petrovna Barmina.

1924, September - seconded to Leningrad to the Higher Cavalry School, which was soon transformed into the Cavalry Advanced Courses for Commanders (KKUKS).

1925, June 17 - the birth of the daughter of Ariadne (Ada).

September 6 - after the end of the KKUKS, he was appointed commander of the 75th cavalry regiment (former 27th cavalry regiment) of the 5th separate Kuban cavalry brigade.

1926, July 1 - appointed instructor of a separate Mongolian cavalry division in Ulan Bator.

1927, November 18 - "for the successful completion of special tasks while on a business trip" was awarded a gold watch with the inscription "From the Revolutionary Military Council of the Siberian
military

districts."

1928, July - return from Mongolia. Appointed commander-commissar of the 5th separate Kuban cavalry brigade stationed in Dauria.

1929, January - April - sent to Moscow for advanced training courses for senior officers (KUVNAS).

October - November - at the head of the 5th separate Kuban cavalry brigade participates in the Soviet-Chinese conflict around the CER.

1930, January - appointed commander and commissar of the 7th Samara named after. The English proletariat of the cavalry division of the Belarusian Special Military District.

February 13 - for differences in battles on the CER, he was awarded the third Order of the Red Banner.

1932, February - appointed commander and commissar of the 15th separate Kuban cavalry division (the 5th separate Kuban cavalry brigade was deployed to it).

1933, autumn - for success in combat training he was awarded the Order of Lenin. November 26, 1935 - was awarded the personal military rank of division commander.

February 1936 - appointed commander and commissar of the 5th Cavalry Corps of the Leningrad Military District.

June 13, 1937 - removed from command of the 5th Cavalry Corps and placed at the disposal of the People's Commissariat of Defense.

June 27 - Divisional party organization expelled from the party "for the loss of political vigilance."

August 17 - arrested by the NKVD and placed in the inner prison of the Leningrad UGB NKVD "Crosses".

1940, March 22 - released from prison with reinstatement in the party and full rehabilitation.

April - July - was at the disposal of the Office of the Commanding Staff of the Red Army.

May - Promoted to the rank of Major General.

July - appointed commander of the 5th Cavalry Corps.

November - appointed commander of the 9th mechanized district, Kiev Special Military District. 1941, July 11 - appointed commander of the 4th Army.

July 17 - appointed commander of the operational group of troops of the Western Front in the Yartsevo region.

July 23 - for the skillful leadership of the fighting of the 9th mechanized corps, he was awarded the fourth Order of the Red Banner.

August 8 - appointed commander of the 16th Army of the Western Front. And September - was awarded the rank of lieutenant general. 1942, March 8 - seriously wounded by a shell fragment in Sukhinichi.

March 9 - May 22 - was treated in a hospital in the building of the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy.

July 13 - appointed commander of the Bryansk Front. September 28 - appointed commander of the Don Front.

1943, January 15 - awarded the military rank of Colonel General.

February 5 - awarded the Order of Suvorov 1st degree for the victory at Stalingrad. On the same day he was appointed commander of the troops of the Central Front.

April 28 - Promoted to General of the Army.

October 20 - appointed commander of the Belorussian Front, which was renamed the former Central Front.

February 17, 1944 - The Belorussian Front was transformed into the 1st Belorussian Front.

June 29 - for successful actions in the operation "Bagration" he was awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet

Union.

July 29 - "for the exemplary performance of combat missions in directing the operations of the fronts" he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

November 12 - appointed commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front.

1945, January 22 - the military council of the 2nd Belorussian Front issued order No. 006, in which it demanded that "exemplary order and iron discipline be established in the shortest possible time" in all

military units and stop violence against the civilian German population and killing prisoners.

March 31 - "for the skillful leadership of major operations, as a result of which outstanding successes were achieved in the defeat of the Nazi troops", he was awarded the Order of Victory.

June 1st - "for the exemplary performance of the combat missions of the Supreme High Command for the management of operations on the front of the struggle against the German invaders in the region of Pomerania

And

Mecklenburg and the successes achieved as a result of these operations "was awarded the title of twice Hero of the Soviet Union.

June 10 - appointed commander of the Northern Group of Soviet Forces in Poland. The group's administration was created on the basis of the field administration of the 2nd Belorussian Front.

June 24 - commanded the Victory Parade in Moscow.

1946, June 1 - participated in the Supreme Military Council, where he criticized Marshal G.K. Zhukov.

November 7, 1949 - appointed Minister of National Defense of the Polish People's Republic with the title of Marshal of Poland.

1950, May 10 - elected a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the PUWP.

1951, December - for outstanding services in the battles for the liberation of Poland and strengthening the defense capability of the Polish Army, he was awarded the Order of the Builders of People's Poland.

1952, October - after being elected a deputy of the Seimas, he was appointed deputy prime minister

minister.

1956, November 13 - not elected to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the PUWP and resigned from all state and party posts in Poland.

November - appointed Deputy Minister of Defense and member of the board of the USSR Ministry of Defense.

June 1957 - Appointed Chief Military Inspector and Deputy Minister of Defense. October - appointed commander of the Transcaucasian Military District.

October 28-29 - participated in the work of the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, dedicated to the analysis of the accusations of the Minister of Defense G.K. Zhukov in "Bonapartism". He criticized Zhukov.

January 1958 - Reappointed Chief Military Inspector and Deputy Minister of Defense.

April 1962 - appointed Inspector General of the Group of Inspectors General of the Department of Defense.

1968, August 3 - died in Moscow from prostate cancer. August 5 - state funeral of K. K. Rokossovsky. Urn with ashes buried
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Kremlin wall.

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